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# "A GLAD SERVICE."

INTENDED TO BE USED AS  
**Bible Lessons for Young Women's Classes,**  
AND  
AS A GIFT BOOK TO GIRLS.

EASILY ADAPTED TO MOTHERS' MEETINGS,  
LAY-HELPERS' MISSION SERVICES,  
ETC.

BY  
**ELINOR LEWIS,**  
G. F. S. ASSOCIATE,  
AUTHOR OF "HEARTS AND LIVES GIVEN TO CHRIST."

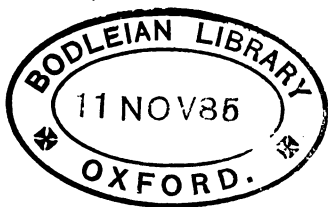
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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

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LONDON:  
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,  
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, CHANCING CROSS, W.C.;  
48, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, E.C.;  
26, ST. GEORGE'S PLACE, HYDE PARK CORNER, S.W.  
BRIGHTON: 135, NORTH STREET.  
NEW YORK: E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.

1885.



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## LETTER TO THE GIRLS WHO WILL READ THIS VOLUME.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

IN sending out this little book into the world, I want very much to say a few special words to you.

Many of you are unknown to me. I never have, and probably never shall, see your faces, in this world at any rate. But still I cannot feel that we are altogether strangers, and I do hope and pray that some of these pages which I have written may be a help to you in serving God. It would make me very happy to think that this would be so.

Others of you, again, are my own particular friends, the members of my classes, who will recollect the afternoons we spent together when these lessons were given. How is it with you now? Are you trying to be "doers" of the words spoken in the class, "not hearers only?" I trust so. We shall have one day to give an account to God for the hours spent there. He will ask us how we have used them, what difference they have made to our lives. What answer shall we be able to give Him? Will you not remember this as

you read over the Lessons, and try hard to carry out every day the advice they give ?

And now I want you all to notice the name I have chosen for the book—"A Glad Service." It is a glad thing, is it not, to serve a good earthly master ; one who is kind, and just, and considerate, who notices what is well done, who makes allowance for mistakes ? And is not the service of the Heavenly Master, of which this book speaks, a far gladder one still ? It brings with it indeed hard things to be done, and fierce battles to be fought. Yes, but it also brings the gladness of knowing the Master's love, the happiness of rejoicing in His presence, the peace of being able to meet death without fear, the certainty of the bright crown which will await us if we are faithful. Truly to be His servant is "a glad service." May He help each one of us, all our lives long, thus to "serve the Lord with gladness."

I remain, with many good wishes,

Your sincere friend,

ELINOR LEWIS.

## P R E F A C E.

IN a former series of Bible Lessons, I mentioned the papers of headings, which I am in the habit of giving to the girls after their Bible Class. To save the time of busy workers, papers referring to this second course of Addresses are printed at the end of the volume. Teachers who do not like to trust entirely to their own memory, may also find them of use to themselves in speaking to their class.

I must now say a few words about the subjects of these Lessons and their sequence.

A Bible Class is, I suppose, generally made up of members whose spiritual attainments vary very greatly. Some are serving God earnestly, and with all their hearts. Some are wavering and undecided. Others again are still quite thoughtless and careless ; indeed the majority of those who join will too probably belong to this division, unless they happen to have been under some specially good influence.

It therefore seems to me that the first Lessons in a course of this kind should be chiefly addressed to them.

and should aim at arousing in them a conviction that their past life has been utterly unworthy of beings "made in the image of God," that it has been a miserable response to Divine goodness, and that a complete change and turning to our Lord is what they require.

I have accordingly taken first such subjects as our need of saving grace, and Christ's power to save (Lesson I); the folly of putting off giving ourselves to Him (part of Lesson II); the tenderness of His love, and the return it demands from us (Lesson IV); the willingness of the Holy Ghost to give us spiritual teaching, which will make us realise the perfect goodness and purity of God, and our own unworthiness (Lesson VI); Death, and its call of "Are you ready?" (Lesson VII.) Such subjects as these generally, under God's blessing, awaken in our hearers a wish to "become different," and to "begin to serve God."

I remember that this was the case in a newly-formed class to whom these Lessons were originally given. After some weeks of teaching, combined with a good many private individual talks on grave subjects, I received a number of letters from the members of the class, telling me that the writers felt they had hitherto been "very thoughtless and careless," and that they wished to "make a real change." "I want now to serve God, what must I do? how must I begin?" This was the substance of many of these letters.

Now it seems to me that, only when our hearers *have reached this state* of mind, should we begin to

give minute and definite teaching on how to start on the Heavenly journey. Till then such teaching will fall dull and flat on uninterested ears.

First, let us try and arouse a general wish to change. Then let us answer as simply and fully as we can the question which will be asked us on all sides—"What must I do to be saved?" "How shall I begin to serve God?"

Lessons VIII and IX on "Sin" and "Pardon" come in naturally at this stage. Many of those who have been awakened to a longing after a higher life are thinking only of the future, and how different they hope to become. The past, with its load of sins to be repented of, is too often forgotten; and, even when this is not so, the sense of sin is generally very vague, and self examination is needed to make it more real and definite.

When once past evil and its burden has been faced, then coming to our Lord for a realised accepted Pardon and Rest will have a very much deeper meaning than it ever had before. And, out of this realised Pardon will arise a far stronger wish for self surrender and service, which in different ways form the subjects of the latter Addresses.

The Lessons on "Sin" and "Pardon" seem to me, therefore, the most important in the course. I think they should be carefully worked up to, as I have said, by previous Lessons, by private talks, and perhaps by letters from the teacher to each member, bringing home individually the questions—"Are your past sins

forgiven?" "Are *you* trying to lead the life of God's accepted pardoned children?"

An increased solemnity during the two Lessons will also be brought about by telling the class beforehand on what subjects you are going to speak, and by asking them to pray that the words spoken may, through the power of the Holy Spirit, be a real help to all present, however weak and poor those words may be in themselves.

And when Bible teaching on Sin and Pardon has sunk into the hearts of the class, it will be very easy to work from it. Those who have learned something of the sinfulness of their own sins, and of the perfect love which has forgiven them, will thirstily drink in advice about how to obey that loving One. They will be anxious to become Communicants as soon as the importance and blessing of the Holy Communion is pointed out to them, they will long to work for their Lord in every way they can.

How often teachers say to us, "I cannot get so-and-so to become a Communicant, though I have talked to her about it over and over again." What is the reason? Is it not very frequently that workers begin by pressing the necessity of Holy Communion before they have tried to awaken any real spiritual life? And, when the presence of sin is unfelt, when the Saviour's forgiveness has never been definitely sought and accepted, when the soul has never surrendered itself wholly to Him, can we wonder that the gift of His indwelling *in the Holy Communion* should be but little valued?

We teachers must remember that in spiritual growth there is a sequence as natural as that which takes place in the ripening of the corn-fields. Then let us not try to invert the process decreed by the Lord of the Harvest Himself, but let us take as our motto: "first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear."

ELINOR LEWIS.





# A GLAD SERVICE.

---

## I.

### THE LORD JESUS IS "ABLE TO SAVE" US.

I WANT these hours which we shall pass here at our Bible Class to be solemn, as well as blessed ones. Why? Because we shall spend them very close to our Lord. We meet in His name, and so we have His own promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) Yes, He will always be amongst us, though we shall not see Him. He the all-holy, the all-loving, the all-powerful Lord is here to-day. And He has not come here for nothing. He wants to bestow upon each of us some benefit, some blessing. What shall it be? What is He able to do for us?

The Bible tells us, amongst many others, of three things He is able to do.

- (1) See Heb. vii. 25, *He is able to save us.*
- (2) See Jude 24, *He is able to keep us.*
- (3) See Jude 24, *He is able to present us faultless to God, with exceeding joy.*

You see He, our blessed Lord and Saviour, wants to have charge, as it were, of each one, from the beginning of our Christian journey to the end. First,

He would save us, then keep us, then at last take us to the Father, who all the while has watched our path with a Father's anxious love.

To show you why we need all this tender care from our Lord, let me tell you a story :

A fire had broken out one night in a back street in London. The sky seemed lit up with the light of the flames, a crowd was gathering all round, every moment the fire engines were expected to arrive.

A little child who had been attracted by the noise and bustle, but who was too young to understand the danger, passed unnoticed through the open door of the burning house. She was about to go up the staircase, which already might give way at any moment, when a man from below saw what she was doing. He dashed into the house at great risk to his life. Half suffocated by the smoke, and scorched by the flames which were now gathering round him, he seized hold of the little child, and taking her up in his arms carried her down the stairs, and out of the house. He had saved her. In another moment she must have been burned to death. But was that all he needed to do for the poor little thing? Might she not be trampled upon in that great crowd? Might she not get again too near those awful flames? Might she not be lost in trying to find her way home? Yes, and so, having saved her, he must also keep her safe. He took her by the hand, resolving to keep fast hold of her, lest she should fall into other dangers. And thus, winding in and out of the narrow streets, he brought her home. Did he leave her there at the door? No, he took her upstairs, and presented her to her father, telling him of the danger in which his little one had been placed, and together he and the father rejoiced over her safety.

*And so in the same way our Lord is able, and*

longing to "save us," to "keep us," and at last "to present us faultless" (faultless because cleansed and kept by Him) before God's throne. What a happy moment that will be! What glad songs of rejoicing will be sung! God grant that each one of us may see that day.

But, in order that this may come about, we must now let Him do the first thing which "He is able" to do for us.

He must save us. Let us talk about that this afternoon.

My friends "He is able to save," He is saving daily, has He saved you?

Some sixteen, or twenty, or twenty-five years ago, you were each one of you taken to Church to be baptised. You were then given over to the Lord Jesus, that He might wash, and cleanse, and save you. You were made His. And some, from that day on, have, I hope, continued His. As they grew able to understand, they were taught to know what He had done for them, to love Him, and to obey Him. They could say, as a friend said to me the other day: "I cannot remember a time when I did not look to Jesus as my Saviour. I have tried to serve Him all my life long."

At their Baptism they were placed in His arms, placed in a state of salvation, and they have continued in that blessed state ever since. Let them thank God for it.

But there are not many who can say this. How is it with you? Perhaps you grew up without loving God, without trying honestly to serve Him. Perhaps you have said every Sunday "I believe in God," I believe in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and yet your belief has made no difference to your lives. Perhaps you have lived very much as you would have

lived if you had never heard of God, and you are stained with the stains of many unforgiven sins. Is it so with any here ?

Oh, then let me warn you to-day. Let me tell you that you are in danger of drawing down upon yourselves God's sentence of condemnation, "Depart from me ye cursed," (Matt. xxv. 41) unless you turn now to Him who is "able to save."

But many don't know or think of their danger. "I am no worse than others," they tell us, "it will all come right some day."

Oh, my friends, the danger is far greater when we don't see it. Travellers tell us that in very cold countries people often die of cold, and when the danger is nearest they know nothing of it. A man goes out on a bitter winter evening. At first he feels the aching and the pain which great cold produces. Then a drowsy, heavy, sleepy feeling comes over him, and unless some friend rouses him, he will do the very worst thing of all for himself: he will sit down by the frozen road-side, little thinking that the sleep into which he is falling will end in death. His danger is greatest when he knows it least.

So it may be with us. So it is with those who are not serving their God, who are sinning daily against Him, and yet have no fear.

They are fitting themselves for hell, not for heaven, and yet they do not think about it. Even if they could get into heaven, into the company of the saints, and angels, and of God Himself, they would be miserable and out of place there. The angels would look at them and wonder how they came into that heavenly home, where everything must be pure, and bright, and clean. Truly "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

*Remember for one moment what is coming to each*

of us. A day is drawing closer when, one by one, we shall leave this world. We shall be called away from all that we know here, from the friends we have loved, from the homes we have lived in, we shall be called away from our work and from our pleasures. Our bodies will have grown cold and stiff in a narrow coffin, and our souls will have gone out alone into the unknown world to meet God. And God will have seen all our past lives, He will have known all we have thought, He will have heard all we have said, He will remember all we have done. By this we shall be judged, and unforgiven sins must condemn us.

My friends, we may be called away to this journey into the unknown land at any time. To-night—now perhaps, the summons may come.

Again I ask, how is it with you? Has Christ saved you? Has He cleansed you from your past sins? Are you ready? Or do you know that many unforgiven sins must rise up between you and God to condemn you, so that He, with all the sorrow of a Father's heart, would yet be obliged to say to you those awful words, "Depart from me."

Do these thoughts make you tremble? If so, read of one in the Bible who felt very much as you feel, see Acts xvi. 19-31. St. Paul and Silas had been preaching about the Lord Jesus, and, through their words, many were turning to Christ. The heathen magistrates, seeing this, were much disturbed, and had them put into prison. "There, at any rate, they could do no harm." So the jailor was to keep them safely, and thrust them into the "inner prison," probably some deep dark dungeon, far away from the other prisoners.

That night strange things were heard within those walls. Firstly, glad hymns rang through the place, for the prisoners were praising their Lord even there.

Then came more wondrous sounds, it seemed as if the foundations of the prison were being shaken, the great doors were opened by no hand which men could see, and the chains which bound the prisoners fell with a clanking noise from off them. Truly God was in this place, who else should work these wonders? The jailor (and it is to him that I would call your attention) understood it all: God was very close to him. Was he fit to be so near God? Up to this moment, perhaps, he had not thought much about it. Perhaps he had gone on from day to day, as some go on now, without ever facing the question of "am I saved, or am I not?" Now God was so near, he could no longer put it away. Trembling all over, he falls at the Apostle's feet, saying, "What must I do to be saved?" Their answer is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," believe in Him who is able to save "and thou shalt be saved."

Sinful men and women cannot save themselves, cannot make themselves fit for heaven, so God has given us a Saviour. He, more than 1800 years ago, sent us one "able to save" us, even His own Son. Could He have shown more love for poor sinners? You know what it costs an earthly father to give up his son to be a missionary, because in far away countries he may catch dangerous fevers, he may be harmed, perhaps killed by the ignorant heathen whom he has gone to teach; and so his father has many a struggle with himself before he allows his son to go forth on this life of toil and peril. Do you think it did not cost the Heavenly Father far more to give His Son for us? And yet He did it. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Son that all who believe in Him may not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) And the Son gave Himself, "Christ *Jesus came into the world,*" why? "To save sinners."

(1 Tim. i. 15.) At His birth a bright light shone in the heavens, and words of joy and peace were spoken by angels to men, "Fear not they said, for unto you is born this day a *Saviour*" (Luke ii. 10, 11). And that loving One died a shameful, awful death upon the cross, for us and our sins, that He might be "able to save" us.

Oh, has He saved you?

Some go on day after day without settling that question. They have almost given themselves to Jesus, have almost settled to trust their souls to Him, like King Agrippa, they are "almost persuaded" to be true Christians (Acts xxvi. 28), but is this any good? Is it of any use to be almost saved?

A drowning man is sinking beneath the waves. On the shore stands a friend who throws out to him a rope. If he catches hold of it he will be safe. He puts out his hand, it is within three inches of the rope. Then he draws back his hand and sinks, never to rise again a living man. He is drowned, is it any use to him that he was almost saved?

Will it be of any use to you at the Last Day if you have almost given yourselves to Jesus? He is "able to save," surely, if He has not already forgiven and cleansed us, we want Him to save us.

Again to-day those words spoken so long ago, repeated so often since to trembling sinners, are ringing in our ears. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He says that He is able to save, believe it. He stands and offers you forgiveness if you will turn from your sins, go and claim it. Stretch out your hand for it, as the drowning man should have stretched out his hand for the rope. To do so, to take Him at His word, is to believe in Him.

"Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come."

“Is that all?” some may say, “am I merely to believe in Jesus, and go to Him for pardon, and then live just as before?” No, indeed! when He has really saved and pardoned you, you will see that you *must* lead a changed life, that you *must* give your heart, your love, your life to Him who has done so much for you. To obey Him will be your first wish, because your heart will overflow with gratitude towards Him.

But some of you may, I hope, have already taken this salvation which our Lord offers you, and are serving Him. You may have been feeling “all this has nothing to do with me, I trust that He *has* saved me.” I do rejoice at that. Still I think it is good for us to look from time to time to our foundations, to our beginnings, and to make sure they are still all right. Sometimes we find cracks in the walls of our houses, then, if we are wise, we look to their foundations to make sure that they are safe. So some church-goers, some communicants, are such undecided half-hearted Christians, Christians so full of cracks, that they, and indeed all of us, had better occasionally look to our foundations, and ask ourselves: “Has He, who is able to save, saved me?” “Am I still in that saved state in which He once placed me, or have I slipped back again into a life of carelessness and sin?” You know a child saved from a burning house, such as we talked of at the beginning of this Lesson, might run back into the fire to fetch a favourite toy, and so with us, a sinner once saved, may alas return into the very danger from which Christ rescued him.

But it is not to those who have given themselves to Christ, who have believed in Him, and who do humbly hope He has saved them, that I have specially been speaking to-day.

*I have wanted to remind those amongst you who*



know you are not fit to meet God, that there is One who is "able to save" *you*. He came "to seek and to save those which were lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

He has come here to-day to seek and to save you. He is stretching out to you hands of love, hands scarred with the cross's nails. He says to you, "I am able to save you." "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Matt. ix. 28.)

"That which Christ so hardly wrought,  
That which He so dearly bought,  
That salvation, mortals, say,  
Will you madly cast away?"

Oh, rather turn from sin to Jesus, with the earnest cry, "Lord save me, I perish."

"Is that all?" some may say, "am I believe in Jesus, and go to Him for pardon, live just as before!" No, indeed! when really saved and pardoned you, you will see *must* lead a changed life, that you *must* give heart, your love, your life to Him who has much for you. To obey Him will be your *must* because your heart will overflow with love towards Him.

But some of you may, I hope, have already this salvation which our Lord offers you and are living Him. You may have been feeling - all this nothing to do with me, I trust that He *will* do I do rejoice at that. Still I think it is good look from time to time to our foundation beginnings, and to make sure they are still sound. Sometimes we find cracks in the walls of a house, if we are wise we look to their foundations, and make sure that they are safe. So some of our communicants, are such undecided Christians, Christians so full of cracks, that indeed all of us had better occasionally look at our foundations, and ask ourselves: "Has He *ever* saved me?" "Am I still in that *state* in which He once placed me, or have I *fallen* again into a life of carelessness and sin?" "a child saved from a burning house, such *as* at the beginning of this Lesson, and *fallen* into the fire to fetch a *straw* again?" "a sinner once saved, may alas return *again* to the *place* from which Christ rescued him?" But it is not to those who have given *themselves* to Christ, who have believed in Him, and *are* living Him, that He has saved them, that He is speaking to-day.

I have wanted to remind

## II.

### HE IS "ABLE TO KEEP" US.

WE talked last Sunday of Jesus being able to save you. To-day I want to take you another step in the Christian life, and tell you of the second thing He is able to do for you.

A man weighed down with the sense of his own sinfulness entered once a Mission Hall in London. "I am so bad, there can be no forgiveness for one like me," those were his thoughts as he took his seat.

The preacher spoke that night of Jesus and His power to save: he described, with earnest burning words, the love which made Him willing to be nailed to the cross; he spoke of the bleeding hands stretched out on that cross to "draw all men unto Him"; he repeated the Lord's full, free invitation to every penitent sinner—"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."

As the man listened, light seemed to shine into his heart. Such a loving Saviour, such a powerful Saviour, would surely be "able to save" even him; he yet might find pardon and peace. What a hope! What joy! When the service was over he stayed behind to speak to the preacher, and there and then he knelt in prayer, coming to Jesus very humbly, yet very trustfully, knowing now that one so tender, so loving, would not cast him out.

But, before he left the room, a dark shadow of anxiety *again* crossed his face, "I see what a Saviour He is," *exclaimed the poor man to the preacher,* "I see that

He is able to save even me, and at this moment my whole heart is full of longing to lead, for His sake, a pure and holy life. But how will it be with me tomorrow? how will it be with me next week? The old temptations will return, my feelings will have grown cold, what is there to prevent me falling back into my past sinful ways?"

The preacher opened his Bible, and pointing to Jude 24, he said, "My friend, Christ is not only 'able to save you,' He is also 'able to keep you,' trust yourself to His keeping."

It is true, look for yourselves at Jude 24, and let me speak to you now about these words.

Many will say, when describing their own lives, "I did go to Him for pardon and cleansing when I was preparing for my confirmation, or when I belonged to such and such a Bible Class, or after that trouble came to me and made me more serious. I did go to Him then and give myself to Him, and I do want very much to be holy, but yet I am always disobeying when I mean to obey; day after day I do the same wrong things, I get on very little, if at all, in my religious life, till at last I begin to doubt whether I am His, to doubt whether I am forgiven, to doubt whether, if death came, He would accept me.

Is this very much what some of you feel?

And yet the Bible says, the Lord Jesus is not only "able to save"; He is also "able to keep you from falling," and surely it is true. He who can keep everything in order in this wonderful world of ours, He who can keep the sun, and moon, and stars, in their proper places; He who can keep the sea from overflowing the land, shall He not be able to keep His own people from sin?

Yes, He was able, He is able; but too often we have not let Him keep us, and therefore we have fallen—is

it not so? That last time when you were cross, or selfish, or unkind, were you looking to Jesus to keep you? I think not, I think you had forgotten Him for the moment altogether, and thus you fell.

A little child is learning to walk. As long as its elder brother holds its hand, it gets on all-right. Then thinking it can manage quite well alone, it pulls away from his keeping, and at once it falls.

Just so with us (see Is. xli. 13): "I, the Lord . . . will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee: fear not, I will help thee." And as long as we let Him keep us, we do not fall. "He *is* able to keep you."

But, before going any further, let me pause a moment, and ask you to notice one thing.

He can only keep you, if you are His.

Now you were given to Him years ago in your Baptism, but alas, how many, as they grow older, do not remain His, because they do not wish to be His servants. Not being willing to obey Him, they take back, as it were, the lives and the hearts which, at the font, were made over to Him, and of course, then He cannot "keep" them.

We can only keep what is ours. Is it not so always? You say, for instance, to a friend, "are you still keeping that book or that picture which I gave you?" and perhaps the answer is, "Am I keeping it? No, how can I? You gave it to me, and then you took it back again; it is not mine now; of course I am not keeping it."

Have you acted like this? If so, will you not to-day give yourself again to Jesus, that you may be really and truly His, and that He may keep you? Perhaps you are still saying, "I mean to turn to Him some day or other, but not just now, it will be time enough when I am older."

*"Time enough when you are older!"* Who knows

whether that time will ever come? Who knows whether you will live to be any older?

Let me tell you of one who put it off in this way, and to whom, as far as we can see, the time for giving himself to Christ never did come.

The clergyman had often spoken to J. about his careless, ungodly ways, but the words seemed to have no effect, "I don't take any interest in religious matters," was his answer. At times he would go to church, but no change seemed to take place in his daily life.

One night, a messenger came to the clergyman's house to say that J. was very ill, and "wanted to see the minister at once." It was late, it was dark, it was cold; but yet gladly did the minister follow the messenger, thinking to himself "perhaps, at last, the time has come when J. *will* turn to Christ." He went straight upstairs into the sick man's bedroom, and sitting down beside him, began to tell him of the pardon God offers to sinners who repent. But his words seemed to bring no look of understanding on the pale, immovable face. "Speak louder, sir," said the wife, "I think he is growing deaf." The rector raised his voice, but it was no good, plainly the dying man could not hear. A slate was then brought, and in large round letters the clergyman wrote upon it a few words, and held them up before the sick man's eyes. Would he be able to see them? Alas, no! His hearing had gone, his sight seemed to be also going; the film of death was already covering his eyes. Then his lips moved, and bending down to catch the words, his heart-broken wife could hear him say, "*Too late, too late!*" The time for repentance, the time for giving himself to Christ had been put off till, in this world, at any rate, it never came.

Will you do as this poor man did, or will you give

yourselves now to the Saviour, that He may keep you till death comes?

See a question which He is asking you: (1 Chron. xxix. 5) "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" and notice in his question two little words which are very, very important. Which do I mean? "*This day*," no putting off, no waiting till you are older can be safe. "To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Only give yourself to Him, then let Him keep you, and you will find "He is able" to do so.

(1) *And how will He keep you?* More tenderly, more carefully than you can imagine. None of us know half the love which the Lord has for His people.

(See Deut. xxxii. 9-12) "For the Lord's portion is His people . . . He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him."

What a beautiful passage! Yes, "He found" you when you were little, tiny children, and brought you to the waters of Baptism. "He has led you about" and been with you ever since. "He instructed you" by holy words learned at your mother's knee, or in the Sunday-school, and now He wants to "keep" you from evil, as the apple of his eye.

Do you understand what that means? The apple, or pupil of the eye, is the part we see with, and is therefore very precious to us. To guard it the eyebrows are placed above it, the eyelids over it, and eyelashes are given to protect it from dust. You would sooner keep from harm the apple or pupil of your eye, than any other part of your body, would you not? for you know that if it were to be injured, you might

never more see the green trees, and the blue sky, and the faces of your friends. How precious then it is to you.

Now look again at Deut. xxxii. 10 : The Lord will keep you "as the apple of His eye" if you will only let Him do so. How precious you must be to Him.

Another passage shows us also the love with which He is ready to keep His servants. We know of a prayer which the Lord Jesus prayed just before His sufferings. At that time His mind must have been very full of all that He was going to bear. He knew of the Agony He would endure in the Garden, He knew of the insults which would be offered Him during His trial, He knew of the terrible scourging, and the awful nailing to the Cross, and these events were drawing very close.

Yet in His prayer He speaks much of His followers, of His own people, and with gladness He thanks God that out of the twelve Apostles, He has been "able to keep" eleven. Judas only would not let himself be kept, and so fell away. (See John xvii. 12) "Those that Thou gavest me *I have kept*, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition." Each of the eleven Apostles had many temptations, many difficulties to meet, each one might very easily have gone back and ceased following the Lord. But no, they had trusted themselves to Jesus, and He had kept them. And His heart was so full of joy at this, that even with the dark shadow of suffering close upon Him, He was able to dwell upon it, and thank God for it.

(2) *And when will He keep us?* The answer is, *always*. (See Ps. cxxi. 5, 6) "The Lord is thy keeper . . . the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night." Only remember to carry out the first verse of the same Psalm : "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help." Be ever "looking unto Jesus" and you will find how the other verses



come true ; how He is ready always to keep His people from falling.

When, in the morning, you go out to your work, or when, in the evening, you come back from it, He will be with you. (See verse 8) "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth for evermore."

When, during the day, temptations come to you and it is hard to be gentle, hard to be unselfish, hard to be brave, and faithful, and earnest, then again lift up your eyes to Him and (verse 7) "the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, He shall preserve thy soul." Let Him keep you in every battle, let Him give you strength, and you will find that you do win the victory.

And when the dark hours of the night come, and all is quiet around you, "He that keepeth thee will not slumber" (verse 3). His watchful care will still be over you. He keeps the sick and sorrowful through the long sleepless hours. "I have had much pain to bear," wrote a great sufferer to me only the other day, "but all through it our Lord was very near to me." He had been keeping her patient, almost joyful in the midst of torture.

And it is not only the suffering that He keeps in the quiet night hours. He watches also by the bedside of the young and healthy, giving them the sleep by which they may drink in rest and refreshment, and strength to serve Him better next day.

(3) *Where will He keep you?* Again I answer *everywhere* (Gen. xxviii. 15) "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest . . . I will not leave thee." Some girls say, "If I have to go away from home and leave my Church, or my Bible Class, and get among strangers, shall I ever go on serving God?" Do you feel this? Then remember *that if you will let Him, your Lord will keep you every-*

where. He will be with you there as well as here, He will give you strength there as well as here, He is "able to keep you in all places." Surely, then, you need not dread the future.

Or, perhaps, you have to spend part of each day with someone who has a quick temper, and who is "very trying," and whilst you are with that person you are constantly tempted to speak sharply and crossly. "I really cannot help it," you have sometimes exclaimed with a sigh. But there, too, our Lord "is able to keep you" if you will be ever looking to Him to do so. You need not sin: "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear," (1 Cor. x. 13) and "the Lord is your keeper," why then should you fall?

Only let Him keep you, as each temptation or difficulty comes, put yourself into His keeping, "lift up your eyes to Him," you will find His promise come true.

And this life of trusting ourselves to Jesus, is a very blessed life; it brings peace and rest to tempted and troubled ones.

You know how unhappy a little child is if left alone, it grows uneasy and frightened, and soon begins to cry. But when its elder brother comes into the room the tears cease, and are replaced by smiles. It is now no longer anxious, it fears nothing, it is safe and happy in his keeping.

Just so with us, we may be glad and restful in the keeping of our Lord (see Is. xxvi. 3) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

Then turn to Him with all your heart, that He may save you; look to Him hour by hour, that He may keep you; and on a glad day, beyond death, beyond the grave, He will fulfil His third promise:

He will "present you" to God with exceeding joy (Jude 24). All falls, all struggles will be over then; when He leads you to the Father as His saved ones, His kept ones. You will take your place in the glorious crowd of Christ's people, and join in their glad chorus as they sing: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . be glory . . . for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.) God grant that none may be missing on that day; the thought of it should cheer you when you are in the midst of temptation, and meanwhile,

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee . . . the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." (Numb. vi. 24, 26.)

### III.

#### PRAYER.

You all say your prayers, at least I hope and trust you do. Have you ever thought how very, very important those moments are, which you spend each day in prayer? Everything depends on how you spend them. They may bring you nothing at all. Or they may be golden moments, drawing down on you thousands of blessings, strengthening you through your earthly life, training you for heaven. You may be as poor as a pauper in things to do with your soul, or you may be as rich as a prince. All depends on how you pray.

God's hand is full of blessings for you, different blessings for each one, because each one has different needs. He is "waiting to be gracious," (Is. xxx. 18) waiting to open His hand, and pour down on you these blessings. What will make Him do so? Prayer.

Now have your prayers hitherto caused Him to open His hand? Have they brought you much? What have they been like?

I do not know. But of one thing I feel sure. We may each of us learn to pray better, and to get more help through our prayers. Our Lord says, "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John xvi. 24.)

So this afternoon we will talk about *how to pray*, and I am going to ask you to make for yourselves five rules about your prayers.

1. *When you pray, expect an answer.* Our Father in heaven gives us gladly what we ask for, whenever it is good for us to have it. And our Lord tells us to remember this, and so to expect an answer to our prayers.

(see Mark xi. 24), "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

A little girl of whom I once read, was going to leave her father's house and make a home with strangers. Of course, on first arriving, she felt very sad and lonely, but she took her trouble to God in prayer, and asked Him to make her new friends kind to her. The same evening, the lady with whom she was to live came to say good night to her before she went to sleep. The little girl looked up smilingly and trustfully in the lady's face, "I know you are going to be very good to me," she said, "What makes you think so?" asked the lady, "Because I have prayed that you may be like a mother to me, and I know God will hear my prayer." That little girl fulfilled her Lord's command which you have just read. When she prayed she believed that she should receive, she expected an answer.

Once when St. Paul was in prison at Rome he wanted very much to go and visit Philemon at Collosse. He felt that some talk with Philemon about the Master in heaven would refresh him and give him courage. It would make him able to face his struggles more gladly, more bravely. But how could he get to his friend? here he was shut up within four prison walls. The case seemed hopeless enough. What did he do? He took his trouble to God in prayer, and asked that he might be allowed to go to Rome, and Philemon did the same. See whether St. Paul expected an answer to these prayers. (Philemon 22.) He so believed that God would hear them, that he even told Philemon to find him a lodging at Collosse, for, said he, "I trust that through your prayers, I shall be given unto you."

You remember how we read in the Bible that St.

Peter too was put into prison for preaching about the Lord Jesus. And for him also the Christians prayed earnestly, asking that he might get free again. But they were not like St. Paul, they prayed without expecting an answer to their prayers. (See Acts xii. 5, 7, 11-16.) God sent the answer, He brought St. Peter out of prison, and led him to the very house where all his friends were on their knees praying for him. St. Peter knocked at the door, and a girl named Rhoda came out; when she heard his voice she ran back to tell the others he was free, and standing at the gate.

They had just been asking God to give them back their friend, to set him at liberty, but when they hear that God has done so, they are "astonished," and they say to Rhoda: "thou art mad." They would not believe that God had granted them the very thing they had been praying for. Have you sometimes been like them in this? Have you prayed with so little belief God would hear you, that you would have been surprised if the answer had come? Oh, remember the Master's words. When you pray for blessings "believe that ye receive them," expect an answer.

2. *Speak to God as to a Friend*, we are told to "come boldly to the throne of grace." (Heb. iv. 16.) We need not fear Him who is seated on that throne.

People often complain of wandering thoughts whilst they are praying. "Other things," they say, "will come into my head. I repeat with my lips holy words of prayer, and all the time my thoughts have gone off to something I am going to do in the afternoon, or to something a companion said to me yesterday." Why is it? Is it not because they do not realise, they do not remember that in their prayers they are speaking to a dear, loving Friend?

When you go out to see a friend and are talking to

her, your thoughts do not wander to other things, for you know she is listening, you know she cares for you, you know she is interested in what you are telling her. So when you pray, speak to God as to a friend, and your thoughts will not wander.

Again, we tell a friend everything, don't we? When you have been unhappy, have you not often found what a help and comfort it is to tell a friend about your trouble? "I feel much better now" you have said afterwards. And to a real friend we tell not only our great troubles, but also our little anxieties, our joys—everything in short.

Oh then in prayer tell God everything, speak to Him as to a real friend. He is a very tender Friend, for He careth for you (1 Pet. v. 7); a very understanding Friend, for He knows you (John x. 14); a very feeling, sympathising Friend, for in all your afflictions He is afflicted (Is. lxiii. 9); a very powerful Friend, for He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20).

Yes, tell Him everything, He invites you to do so. (See Phil. iv. 6.) "In *everything* by prayer . . . let your requests be made known to God."

You have, I hope, some prayer which you have learned, and which you use every day. But do not stop there. When you have said it, go on to speak to God straight out of your own heart, in any words that come into you head. Tell Him all you feel, all you care about, all you want, tell Him everything.

I wonder whether hitherto you have spoken to God in this way. For instance, when you have been out of a place and have been looking for a new situation, you have told your earthly friends about it, have you not? But have you also spoken to the Heavenly *Friend about the place you want to find?* Have you

asked Him to guide you to the right one, to one where you will be helped to serve Him, to one where you may be of use to others?

Again, some of you have lovers, some of you are engaged to be married. Do you pray about your love affairs? Believe me, a girl who prays for her lover, who prays that she may be married to him in God's good time, who prays to be a good wife, who prays for God's blessing on her future home, is far more likely to have a happy married life than one who never speaks to God about it. And she, we may be sure, will not sin before her marriage in the sad way that, alas, so many do.

But are you saying to yourselves "I never thought we could pray like this about the things to do with our every-day life. I thought we ought only to pray about being good and serving God." Let me remind you again that we are to speak to God as to a friend, and that we are told "in everything to let our requests be made known to Him." I think the little child who after dinner said for its grace: "Thank God for my good pudding," knew better how to speak to God than some of us. It spoke to Him simply and trustfully, just as to a friend.

But of course do not only speak to God about the things to do with your every-day life. This life is short, our bodies last only a few years, but our souls live on for ever and ever. The things to do with our souls are therefore much the most important. So speak most to God about them. Tell Him of your faults, your temptations, your difficulties. Ask His help in all of them. Tell Him that you do wish to obey Him, tell Him that you long to love Him more, tell Him that you want to go on serving Him to the end, till you are landed safe in heaven. Tell Him, in short, everything to do with your souls and with your



religious life, as well as with your earthly life. Speak to Him as to a friend.

3. *Be persevering in prayer*, keep on asking. See what our Lord says about this, Luke xviii. 1, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." Some people think the answer must come at once, or not at all. Why should this be? God says He will hear us, He will give us what we want if it is good for us to have it, but are we to settle when His gifts shall come? Perhaps He delays to send them, in order to see whether we are enough in earnest to keep on asking. Remember how persevering Jacob was. (Gen. xxxii. 26-29.) He wanted God's blessing, and He did not cease praying for it because it was not given at once. Was the prayer granted at last? (see v. 29), "He blessed him." So it may be with you. Only keep on asking, the blessing will come.

4. *Pray often during the day*. Some girls "say their prayers," as they call it, every morning and evening; but as to praying while they are at their work, while they are in the workroom or the scullery, or dusting the rooms, or churning the milk, why the idea has never struck them! and yet, see 1 Tim. ii. 8, "I will that men pray everywhere;" and again, Eph. vi. 18, "Praying always." Those words tell us as plainly what to do as the commandment "Honour thy father and thy mother." Then may you disobey them? Or rather, if you understand what a blessing prayer brings, can you wish to disobey them? Oh, pray often in the day, send up to God little short prayers about what you are doing, and ask His help. Tell Him of the fault you have committed, and ask His forgiveness. Tell Him of the temptation that you know is coming, and ask for His strength. You find it perhaps *speci-ally hard to be pleasant* and bright when with some

companion who always tries you. Then look up to God and say, "I find it so difficult to be gentle when with — help me not to say any cross words." Or you are going out to tea with friends, and you may be tempted to say wrong things when with them. Then look up to God with the prayer "Keep . . . my lips that I offend not with my tongue." Or you are tired and feel inclined to slur over your work. Then say, "Oh God, help me to do it thoroughly, for thee." This habit of "praying everywhere," of "praying always," is the only way not to fall, for you cannot keep yourself from falling. God only can keep you, and by prayer you put yourself into His keeping :

"I am so weak dear Lord, I cannot stand  
 One moment without Thee.  
 But oh! the tenderness of Thine enfolding,  
 And oh! the faithfulness of Thine upholding,  
 And oh! the strength of Thy right hand.  
 That strength is enough for me."

5. *Strive after what you pray for.* There is no good in praying to be gentle, and then going straight off to cuff and shake the little brother or sister who tried your temper. There is no good in praying to be kept from sinful words, and then, when at tea with your friends, letting yourself join in all sorts of wrong talk. We must strive as well as pray. See 2 Chron. vii. 14, where we are told that God's people are not only to pray, but must also "turn from their wicked ways," and then He will "hear from heaven."

Now perhaps you have been thinking "people make a great fuss about prayer, but I have never found it the wonderful help they say." Some girls, I know, value prayer so little that they only pray once a day. In the mornings they get up late and hurry down stairs, without having knelt in prayer to the Heavenly Friend. They go out to battle unarmed. They go

to meet temptation unprepared. I wonder how often they fall.

Are there any here to-day who do this? Or again, have any of you prayed and yet found no blessing through your prayers?

If so, let me ask you what your prayers have been like? Have you tried to keep the five rules of which I have spoken to you? Have you expected an answer to your prayers? Have you spoken to God as to a friend? Have you been persevering in prayer? Have you prayed often during the day? Have you striven after what you prayed for? I think not. But I hope that from to-day you will make a change in your prayers. I hope you will honestly try to keep my five rules, saying at the same time, "Lord, teach me how to pray."

Then I believe you will find that prayer is all I tell you. You will see that you do get rich blessings by it. And you will soon be able to say:

"I love the Lord because He *has* heard my voice and my supplication . . . therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.)

## IV.

### THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR US.

YOU often think of your friends, and remember words which they have said, and things which they have done, don't you ?

Now I wonder which friends you like best to think of? Those, probably, who care most for you. Those who want to be often with you, who write you long affectionate letters when you are parted ; who speak warmly of you to others. You value their friendship most, because you value their love.

Some will tell us sadly that no-one cares for them : " with me," they say, " it is nothing but work, work, work all day, and nobody takes any interest in me, or ever speaks a loving word to me."

A gentleman was one day walking down the street of a country town, when he passed a boy who was crying bitterly, " What is the matter ?" said the gentleman kindly. The boy looked up amidst his tears, " I am so lonely," he said, " I have no father or mother, no friend, no one to love me."

If you ever hear sorrowful words like these, tell the speakers that they are mistaken. Tell them that there *is* One who loves them with a tenderer, deeper, truer love than any earthly friend could feel. Tell them of the love which the Lord Jesus Christ has for them. It is of His love that I want to speak to you to-day. Could we find a gladder, holier, more beautiful subject ?

Now the Bible everywhere speaks to us of Christ's love for us. The prophecies are full of it as they fore-

tell His sufferings. The Gospels are full of it as they relate what He said, and did, and bore for us. The Epistles are full of it in almost every verse. It is written all up and down the Bible in big red letters: "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 2c.) And yet how many miss it! For instance, children almost always know that He died for us, because of our sins. But if asked what made Him willing to die for us, too often they cannot tell.

Oh, my friends, when we first learn to know in our own hearts something of His love, perhaps at our Confirmation, or through a Bible Class, or a sermon, or through some time of trouble, then comes the wish to serve Him.

God's servants have all tried to understand "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height . . . of the love of Christ." (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) Let us too study the subject earnestly to-day. Though, however much we do so, we shall never know all about His wondrous love for us. Why? Because it "passes knowledge," it is greater than we can know.

Now I think we can best help ourselves to feel the love of our great Heavenly Friend, by talking and thinking of the love of earthly friends for each other. So I will begin by telling you a story about one who loved very much, and how he showed it.

There are, of course, many people who would like to go by sea to some distant country, perhaps to America or Australia, and who yet cannot afford to pay their passage; and boys sometimes manage to creep down unnoticed into a ship and hide themselves amongst the luggage. Only when the ship has been started some time, do they summon up courage to come out and show themselves. A boy who does this is called "a stowaway," because he conceals himself, *or stows himself away* in some hidden corner.

I remember reading once of a poor boy who, knowing no better, had hidden himself thus in a ship which was bound for one of our far-away colonies. Being nothing but a stowaway, he met with a good deal of rough treatment from the sailors. The captain only was kind to him. There was something about his ragged appearance and pale sad face, which drew out the captain's pity and interest, and often he would have a talk with the boy about the life he had left, and the life he was expecting to find in Australia.

Some weeks after the ship had started, a great gale began to blow. All round black, heavy clouds were gathering, the waves of the sea were rising to a fearful height; it was plain that the storm which was coming would be a violent one. Every moment the swaying and tossing of the ship became worse and worse; the great waves seemed as if they would cover her altogether, and swallow her up.

Suddenly an alarm was given, and the awful news spread quickly that the ship was damaged, and the water was coming in. The pumps were at once called into use, but in vain. The water poured in faster than it could be pumped out. Before long the ship would sink. Plainly all must leave it as soon as possible.

Quickly the boats were lowered, and quickly they were filled.

But when the last boat was declared to be as full as safety would allow, two figures yet remained standing on the deck of the fast sinking ship. They were those of the captain and the stowaway. The captain held in his hand a life belt (that you know is a thing which, tied round the body of a man, prevents him from sinking in the waves). All eyes were eagerly fixed on him; his friends were expecting him to put it on and throw himself into the sea.

But no, he acts differently. Turning to the pale,

terror-stricken boy by his side, he says to him: "You shall have the life belt; you shall live; I will die." Then he adds hastily, "Go and see my wife and tell her about me, when you arrive."

In another moment the boy is in the water, battling with the waves. Yet another moment, and the captain is seen no more. The ship has sunk, the waves have covered him. His wife will never meet him again in this world.

Now what was it which made the captain ready to die for the poor stowaway? Was it not love? What text do you think might have been put on his memorial? Surely, this one: "Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.) How fondly the boy must remember him! How often he must speak of the captain who died for him!

And the Lord Jesus, your great Heavenly Friend, has died for you, because He loved you. His sufferings were not short like those of the captain.

Think of His agony in the garden on that Thursday night, when great drops of Blood fell from Him. Think of His terrible loneliness when His disciples all ran away and left Him in the hands of those who mocked Him, and insulted Him, and spat on Him. Think of the painful scourging, followed by those awful six hours on the Cross, when He hung in torture from the four great wounds in His hands and feet. And He need not have borne any of it. He might instead have remained in Heaven, where all was bright and happy. There was nothing to make Him come on earth and suffer so, except—His *love* for us.

So we see His love by His willingness to suffer and die for us. But not alone by that. He showed it also in everything He said and did while He was on earth. Let me take two more instances.

*In the home of Martha and Mary there was great*

trouble, for Lazarus, their brother, was dangerously ill. They had sent at once to tell Jesus, but He had not come; the sickness grew worse and worse; Lazarus died; and still nothing was heard of the Friend for whom they longed. Could it be that He did not care whether they were in trouble or no? At last they received the joyful news that He was come. (See John xi. 32-37.) And how did He behave? Their sorrow would not be a lasting one, for He was about to bring the dead brother back to life. Yet the tender, loving heart of the Lord Jesus, felt so much for the sisters' anxiety and sadness during those days of mourning, that He groaned and "was troubled," (v. 33) and as He saw that grave stone "Jesus wept." (v. 35). The next time you stand with a breaking heart by an open grave, remember those two words, "Jesus wept." The next time you are unhappy, remember that it was when He "saw Mary weeping" (v. 33) that "He was troubled." And oh, thank Him for the love which so fills His heart with tender sympathy.

I have only time to remind you of one more way in which He showed His love when on earth. I mean His habit of making excuses for those who sinned against Him (see Matt. xxvi. 38, 40, 41). He had gone into the garden of Gethsemane on the night before His death. His hour of great suffering was coming. When you are unhappy, or in pain, you like to know, don't you, that those who care for you are near, and are feeling with you? In this He was just the same. He took aside three of His disciples, and asked them to watch with Him. Then, in the midst of His sufferings, He came back to them. Did He find them thinking of Him, feeling with Him, praying for Him? No—they were asleep. But all He said was "could ye not watch with Me one hour?" And then He even made for them a gentle tender



excuse (see v. 41). They were willing to have watched with me, He said, but they were weak and tired. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Perhaps when you have blamed yourself for some carelessness or sin into which you had fallen, He has made for you too a loving excuse of the same kind. Perhaps He said then of you, "she wanted to do right, but she was very tired, she was not well.") He showed this same habit of making excuses for those who sinned against Him when He was on the Cross. What was it that He said as the great nails were being hammered by the soldiers through His hands and feet? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) That was His excuse then. Oh, do not these words also show His love?

But perhaps you are thinking, as a girl said to me the other day, "I know He loved His disciples, I know He loved the people He met when on earth. But how can I tell that He loves me as He did them? That is what I want to know."

I think that is what we all want to know. So look out Heb. xiii. 8, which will tell us something about it. He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." You see the Lord Jesus has not changed. He is just the same now as He was then. So surely He has just the same tender love in His heart now for you and me, that He had, when on earth, for Martha and Mary, and His disciples.

And, to make us still more certain of this, the Bible tells us of four things which He is *feeling now*, and *doing now*, all of which show His love. What are they?

(1) *He suffers when we sin.* See Heb. vi. 6, which says that those who have served Him, and then fall back again into a life of sin, "crucify Him afresh." That is, they make Him suffer as much through their sin

as He suffered when He hung on the Cross. To try and understand that, let us go back again to the love between earthly friends. You know how the mother of a son, who is taking perhaps to drink, will suffer through his sin. You know how she will sit up in the evening waiting and watching for him, till her face grows white, and wan, and anxious. "To-night, at any rate, he will come home sober," she says longingly to herself. And oh, how disappointed she looks when her listening ears catch at last the sound of his unsteady footsteps, and she gets up with trembling hand to let him in. Now what is it which makes her care so much? Surely her love for her son. And so it is love for us which makes the Lord Jesus suffer when we sin.

(2) *He prays constantly for us.* See Heb. vii. 25, where we read stronger words than that: "He lives to make intercession," that is, to pray "for us."

About 1500 years ago there was a very holy Christian woman, whose son Augustine caused her much anxiety through his careless, wicked life. For hours together she would pray for him. Very often in the quiet moments of the night, if you could have seen her, you would have found her on her knees, gazing up to Heaven, her hands clasped, her eyes streaming with tears. She was praying for her son; praying that God would forgive him; praying that God would change his heart; and her prayers were answered; her son became so holy a man that we always speak of him now as Saint Augustine. But what was it that made her pray for him so earnestly? It was love. And it is love for us, that makes our Lord pray constantly and earnestly for us. Perhaps even now, as I am speaking, He is pleading for us. Oh, Lord, we ask Thee to pray that we may know more of Thy love.

(3) *He is very patient with us.* See 2 Peter iii. 9: "He is long-suffering," that is, He is patient with us, because He is "not willing that any should perish."

I heard once of a woman who was wonderfully patient with her husband. He often went out at nights with bad companions, and then would come home, perhaps at three o'clock in the morning, with these low friends, and would knock up his wife and roughly order her to get him some supper. Very gently and brightly she would rise and prepare him everything that she knew he liked best. "If I am patient with him," she thought, "perhaps he will be won over, and become again what he used to be." And what made her so patient? It was love.

And so our Lord is patient with us because He loves us. He might have cut us off long ago; but, no, He waits and pleads with us in our hearts, and calls us to Himself. Truly He is "long-suffering toward us."

(4) *He is preparing a place for us.* (John xiv. 2.) Supposing you had a brother in Australia who wrote and said to you, "During all these years I have been preparing a home for you here. I have saved money, and bought a house, and have arranged it very prettily, just as I thought you would like it best, so that now you can come out to me." Should you not say that brother loved you very much?

Well, then, our Lord is preparing for you your place, your home in Heaven, and it is love which makes Him do so.

And now, "what think ye of Christ?" (Matt. xxii. 42), surely "He is altogether lovely" (Cant. v. 16); "Unto you that believe, He is precious" (1 Pet. ii. 7).

Was I not right when I said that our subject to-day was a glad one? To think and to speak of His love *is very beautiful*, but do not let us end there. With

all of us this is a danger. We like to think about it, or to hear about it, and then sometimes, when we have done so, we go away and forget, and are no different afterwards, to what we were before. This is no good at all. Merely thinking of our Lord is useless, unless thinking of Him helps us to live for Him, and conquer sin for Him.

Let us go back for a moment to that stowaway of whom I told you. You remember that the captain asked him to go and see his wife and tell her about her husband's last moments. Now supposing the boy had not done so. Supposing he had neglected what his dying friend had asked him to do, what should you have said of him? I know you would have despised him for his ingratitude, "Could he not even do that," you would have said, "for one who had loved him so much."

My friends, what have you been doing, what are you going to do for the Lord, whose love for you "passes knowledge." Put to yourselves the question "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" (Ps. cxvi. 12.) He asks you to love Him; He asks you to trust Him; He asks you to obey Him. That is the return He wants. Will you not give it Him? If you refuse, your ingratitude will make even the angels shrink with disgust from you.

Jesus is saying to you to-day, "I have loved you very much. Will you not love me, and become My servant?" He is speaking in your hearts now; He is calling you to Himself and His voice is very gentle, very tender. You will listen, won't you? It is a glad thing to know of Christ's love, and to love Him in return; it is very joyful to give ourselves up to Him and to become His. It makes life happy, it makes death peaceful. And that happiness may become yours to-day, if you give yourselves to Him now.

I could not do without Thee,  
 O Saviour of the Lost!  
 Whose precious blood redeemed me,  
 At such tremendous cost.  
 Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,  
 Thy precious blood—must be  
 My only hope and comfort,  
 My glory and my plea.

I could not do without Him!  
 Jesus is more to me  
 Than all the richest, fairest gifts  
 Of earth could ever be.  
 But the more I find Him precious—  
 And the more I find Him true—  
 The more I long for you to find  
 What He can be to you.

You need not do without Him,  
 For He is passing by,  
 He is waiting to be gracious,  
 Only waiting for your cry:  
 He is waiting to receive you—  
 To make you all His own!  
 Why will you do without Him,  
 And wander on alone?

Why will you do without Him?  
 Is He not kind indeed?  
 Did He not die to save you?  
 Is He not all you need?  
 Do you not want a Saviour?  
 Do you not want a Friend?  
 One who will love you faithfully,  
 And love you to the end?

Why will you do without Him?  
 The Word of God is true!  
 The World is passing to its doom—  
 And you are passing too.  
 It may be no to-morrow  
 Shall dawn for you or me;  
 Why will you run the awful risk  
 Of all eternity?

What will you do without Him,  
 In the long and dreary day  
 Of trouble and perplexity,  
 When you do not know the way,

And no one else can help you,  
 And no one guides you right,  
 And hope comes not with morning,  
 And rest comes not with night!

You could not do without Him,  
 If once He made you see  
 The fetters that enchain you,  
 Till He hath set you free.  
 If once you saw the fearful load  
 Of sin upon your soul;—  
 The hidden plague that ends in death,  
 Unless He makes you whole!

What will you do without Him,  
 When death is drawing near?  
 Without His love—the only love  
 That casts out every fear;  
 When the shadow-valley opens,  
 Unlighted and unknown,  
 And the terrors of its darkness  
 Must all be passed alone!

What will you do without Him,  
 When the great White Throne is set,  
 And the Judge who never can mistake,  
 And never can forget,—  
 The Judge, whom you have never here  
 As Friend and Saviour sought,  
 Shall summon you to give account  
 Of deed and word and thought!

What will you do without Him,  
 When He hath shut the door,  
 And you are left outside, because  
 You would not come before?  
 When it is no use knocking,  
 No use to stand and wait;  
 For the word of doom tolls through your  
 That terrible "Too late." [heart,

\* \* \* \* \*  
 But with Him—oh! *with Jesus!*  
 Are any words so blest?  
 With Jesus, everlasting joy  
 And everlasting rest!  
 With Jesus—all the empty heart  
 Filled with His perfect love;  
 With Jesus—perfect peace below,  
 And perfect bliss above.

## A GLAD SERVICE.

Why should you do without Him?  
 It is not yet too late;  
 He has not closed the day of grace,  
 He has not shut the gate.  
 He calls you! hush! He calls you!  
 He would not have you go  
 Another step without Him,  
 Because He loves you so.

Why will you do without Him?  
 He calls and calls again—  
 "Come unto Me! Come unto Me!"  
 Oh, shall He call in vain?  
 He wants to have you with Him;  
 Do you not want Him too?  
 You cannot do without Him,  
 And He wants—even you.<sup>1</sup>

*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

<sup>1</sup> This hymn and the one on page 141 may be obtained for distribution in leaflets (50 copies post free *gd.*), from Messrs. Caswell, Broad Street, Birmingham.

## V.

### WORDS.

I HAVE chosen "Words" for my subject this afternoon. Just think what a number of words you speak every day. How many have you spoken since last Sunday? it is impossible to tell, but probably millions! And, out of so many words, is there not a great fear that some should be wrong ones?

Can you name some different kinds of wrong words? Unkind words, untrue words, cross words, irreverent words, bad words, or oaths, all these are sinful.

Now the Bible says a very solemn thing about our words (see James i. 26), "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, . . . that man's religion is vain."

So you see a girl may be a Church-goer, may be a Communicant, may belong to a Bible Class, and may appear very good indeed, but—if she does not keep her tongue in order, her religion is worth nothing at all, it is "vain." We are to put a bridle on our tongues—you know what a bridle does to a horse. It stops it, and checks it, and keeps it in order. So we must stop our tongues when they would speak wrong words; we must check them, we must keep them in order. That is what the Bible means, when it tells us to "bridle" them.

To-day I shall only have time to speak to you about two kinds of sinful words, and the first I would mention are:

(1) *Unkind words* (see James iii. 6), "The tongue is a fire." In America there are large open tracts of



country, covered with a high grass, which in summer becomes exceedingly dry, owing to the fierce sun which day after day pours down upon it. Sometimes a burning ash from a man's pipe will fall into this grass and set it on fire, and, with a strange crackling and rustling, the fire spreads and spreads, till the whole country for miles around looks like a sheet of flame. How awful! How much can come from a very small beginning. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James iii. 5.)

And the tongue is a fire. A few carelessly spoken, unkind words will spread from mouth to mouth, getting a good deal altered by the way, till a whole neighbourhood is in a blaze, and the place becomes almost too hot to hold the unfortunate person about whom the words were spoken.

I remember once reading a tale which showed how this could happen. It told how a poorly-dressed, sickly-looking boy came one evening into the village of "F." Jane Harris, the girl at the Post Office, saw him from the window, and remarked to a customer with whom she was talking, "I expect that young tramp is just out of prison; he looks as if he were up to no good." These words were repeated from one to another, getting altered into: "Jane of the Post Office says he has been in prison several times for stealing." Till at last the poor boy's character was gone. The farmers refused to employ him: "They wouldn't have young thieves," they said, "about their premises." No one would give him a lodging: "I should expect to see my property disappear," was the answer when he applied for one. And all this scandal was caused through those few careless, unkind words spoken by a young girl.

Did you ever hear a little child's explanation of the word "scandal?" At a school examination the *inspector* once asked, "What do you mean by scandal?"

"Please Sir," answered a child, "it is when nobody does nothing at all, and everybody goes a-talking about it!"

There is a game called "Russian Scandal," which helps to show how cruelly stories get altered in the telling. If you were going to play at it you would all sit in a circle. Then one of you, say Fanny, would tell in a whisper some story which she had heard to Susan, who might be sitting next to her on her right. Susan would repeat it in a whisper to Hetty, her next neighbour, and Hetty would tell it on also in a whisper, till the story had gone quite round the circle and back again to Fanny. Then the last girl, the one who was sitting on Fanny's left hand, would repeat the story out loud, as it had been told to her, and you would be surprised to find how utterly changed it was, from when Fanny whispered it to Susan.

Perhaps to begin with the story was this: "As Jim passed by the farm he saw Betsy Smith washing the tea-spoons at the open window. She put them down, and coming to speak to him said she was going to leave her place, and was to live for a while with an aunt, who had married a London policeman."

And by the time the story had got round the circle, it might have grown to this: "Betsy Smith has stolen the tea-spoons, and has left her place before it was found out. It is believed she has gone up to London, and a great many policemen are after her."

This is something like the way in which stories get altered in real life. Oh, be very careful not to say unkind words about others; you little know what harm you may do. See what the Bible tells us about this (Levit. xix. 16 and James iv. 11), we are "not to go up and down as a tale-bearer," we are not to "speak evil one of another." I know it is hard to obey these commands. We like to tell amusing stories against

our neighbours. It makes people laugh, and they say we are good company. Still, remember that we who want to serve God must keep from unkind words, must check our tongues, must put a bridle on them. If not, those amongst whom we live may think us religious, but in the eyes of God our religion will be in vain.

I read once in a book a few lines of advice about telling stories against other people, which I have often thought of since, and am now going to write out for you. They were these: "Learn then . . . how to deal with the sins of others." *Do not tell your neighbours*—if you can possibly help it—but tell Jesus. Make it a habit.

Is this often done? I fear not.

Stories—perhaps true, or very likely *not* true, of others sins, are repeated to other sinners for love of gossip . . . or even to make people laugh!

"If angels could weep, they would weep over this."

For just think what sin really is.

*a.* The sin of an ungodly man—what is that? A sign that "the wrath of God cometh upon him" (Eph. v. 6). Surely we had better go and tell Jesus of him, and plead for his pardon.

*b.* The sin of a godly man—what is that? The shame of all Christians; "An occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme;"—Dishonour to the holy Name of Jesus. Surely we had better go and tell Jesus of him. It may save him a long time of "back-sliding," and of bitter sorrow afterwards.

Surely it should be with a hushed voice and sorrowing words that we tell anyone else of him, if obliged to do it.

Keep the secret if you can. Tell it not in Gath. There are plenty of the "Saints" sins known already; *why should you give one more* "occasion to the

enemy to speak reproachfully?" Tell it not—except to Jesus Himself.

After that I might almost say, tell it to others *if you can!* You will not have the heart to do it needlessly. Prayer puts all these things in the true light; it changes our view of sin. It turns all bitterness . . . and evil speaking to a tender-hearted, Christ-like sorrow.

Tell Jesus always! Tell Jesus first! and, if possible, tell Jesus only!"<sup>1</sup>

And now I want to speak to you about another kind of sinful words. I mean

2. *Untrue words.* I sometimes hear it said that girls in service as a rule are untruthful, that you cannot trust what they say. This is a terrible accusation. I hope those who make it are mistaken. But I cannot help fearing that many girls do not dread a lie, and shrink from it, and hate it half as much as they ought to. People call untrue words by all sorts of names which seem to smooth them over, and make them appear far less bad than they are. They call them "fibs" or "stories." The Bible speaks plainly always of a lie.

Now I am going to remind you of a lie told hundreds of years ago, and of the punishment sent to the liar. It may help you to think of lies as God thinks of them, by showing you how much He hates them (see 2 Kings v. 20-27). After Naaman had been cleansed from his leprosy by washing seven times in the Jordan, he was anxious to give something to Elisha in return for his cure. But Elisha refused to receive anything. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, heard this, and thought that he might get for himself the gift which had been offered his master. So he waited till Naaman had started homewards in his chariot, and then he ran

<sup>1</sup> "Bible Class Teachings." By the author of "The Old, Old Story," p. 136.

after him, and stopped him. Strangers, he pretended, had just arrived at his master's house, and Elisha had therefore sent him to ask from Naaman some money and some suits of clothes for these strangers. Naaman, believing his story, gave him what he wanted, and Gehazi returned home. When he appeared before his master, Elisha said to him, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" Gehazi had already said what was not true to Naaman: the first untruth brings a second. He now tells another lie, and replies that he had not been anywhere. The lie is spoken, its punishment follows quickly. Gehazi had come into that room a healthy man, he goes out of it "a leper as white as snow." Does not this awful judgment upon a liar teach us what God thinks of lies? And there is a verse in the Book of Proverbs from which we learn just the same thing (see Prov. xii. 22).

"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord." An abomination is something disgusting to us, something we hate and abhor, and would gladly throw away quite out of our sight. Think of willingly doing anything to make ourselves disgusting to God, so that but for His great mercy He would like to rid Himself of us for ever! And yet this is what you do when you tell a lie, for "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord."

Remember, too, how the habit of lying harms a girl, and prevents her from getting on in the world. Not long ago I heard of a young servant who was almost engaged as scullery-maid in a large gentleman's house, but her former mistress was obliged, when asked, to say that she was not truthful. She lost the place, and had to take instead a situation as general servant in a tradesman's family. Again, a lady whom I know was looking out for a laundry-maid. She heard of one who seemed likely to suit, and had almost engaged *her*, when she remembered that the girl had given a

different reason for leaving her last situation, from the one given by her mistress. It was discovered that she had not told the truth, and she too lost the place for which she was applying, a very comfortable one in every respect.

A girl who tells lies is never believed, even when she speaks the truth. We say to ourselves, "She told me a lie last week, perhaps she is telling me one now." Can she wonder that we doubt her word? Some of you may have heard the story of the young shepherd, who one day, to amuse himself, called out "The wolf is coming," "the wolf is coming," and then laughed to see all the people who, with sticks, and rakes, and guns, came out to protect him and his sheep from the wolf, which after all was not there. The next day he tried the same joke, and hollowed "Wolf, wolf," as loud as he could, but only a few people appeared this time to help him. The following week, while he was minding his flock, a wolf really did come out of the wood close by, and attacked one of the sheep. In despair he shouted "Wolf, wolf," with all his might. But no one paid any attention. He had deceived everybody twice, so now that he was speaking the truth, nobody believed him, and he was left alone to die a terrible death.

You see untrue words harm people very much in this world even.

And what about the next world? There liars will be shut out of Heaven (see Rev. xxii. 14, 15). The beautiful golden gates of the Heavenly City will be thrown wide open. Thousands will be passing through them into the presence of their Lord, into the land where all is joy and gladness. But on each liar the gate will be shut, for "whosoever loveth or maketh a lie" must remain outside. Inside is the bright, glorious City. Outside there is darkness, and sorrow, and despair.

Within everything is holy and happy. Without all is vile and sinful. Oh, my friends, will not you try and keep from untrue words, lest *you* should be amongst those shut out from the Heavenly Home?

Many of you, I know, would not tell a lie for anything; you would shrink in horror from the very thought. Then try and help others also to keep from untrue words. Let your little brothers and sisters see how gravely you look on lying, show the young servant who lives in your house how sinful you think it, show her this tenderly and lovingly. When your friends boast to you, as they will sometimes, of the lies they have told to deceive their mistress or their mother, answer them gravely and show, as gently as you can, that you look on lies as God looks on them, that you hate them as He hates them. By doing so you will be helping others to keep from the sin of untrue words.

Now we have talked of the two sorts of wrong words about which I wanted to speak to you to-day: unkind words and untrue words. We have seen how sinful they both are. Is there any thought which will be a special help to us in trying to keep from them? I think there is. It is the thought that God hears every word we speak. Try and remember it all day long. It is a solemn thing to know that He hears me speaking now, that He has heard every word that you and I ever said, that He will hear every word we shall say, "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, oh Lord, Thou knowest it altogether" (Ps. cxxxix. 4).

If you could have seen the Lord Jesus Christ standing by your side last week, when you said hard, unkind things of some friend who had offended you, should you have said them?

*If you could have seen Him near you that day when,*

to escape a scolding, you made a false excuse and told a lie, would you have told it ?

And yet on both occasions He was there, and He did hear you. Oh learn to feel this, and it will help you more than anything to bridle your tongues. Yes, He hears, and what is more, He remembers (see Matt. xii. 36, 37): "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Truly we need to ask God daily to keep us from sinful words.

Will you not often pray, like the Psalmist: "Set a watch, oh Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips" (Ps. cxli. 3).



## VI.

### THE HEAVENLY TEACHER.

YOU speak of me as the teacher of this Bible Class, and so in one sense I am.

But have you ever thought what I can, and what I cannot teach you? Now you know what an interest I take in you, you know how I care for you, and think of you, and pray for you, so I hope you feel sure that I would do as much for you as I possibly can. And how much can I do?

I can teach you to understand your Bibles better, I can teach you what God has promised to His children, I can teach you what our Lord said and did when He was on earth. I can teach you, in short, to know more *with your heads*, but that is all I can do! And therefore if girls come here and get my teaching only, they will go away very much as they came. They will be better scholars perhaps, but not better Christians. I am half afraid this may have been the case with some of you. Oh, my friends, before any more weeks of our Bible Class pass away, stop a moment and think: "What difference is it making to me? Am I only learning a little more head knowledge? Is there no change in my heart and life since I came here?" If so, pray earnestly that you may be taught by the Heavenly Teacher, of whom I am going to speak to you to-day.

For, as you come here, you surely want to learn *much more than the head knowledge which I can teach you*. I pray that you may learn to know your

Heavenly Father and your Saviour in your hearts, which is something far better. To know about God is head knowledge. To know God as your own loving Father, that is heart knowledge. To know about Jesus, and all He said and did, is head knowledge. To know Jesus as your Saviour, and Master, and Friend, that is heart knowledge.

What you learn with your heads may be very useful in many ways, and yet it may make no real difference to you in this world and the next.

What you learn with your hearts must change your lives and your characters.

Now, as I said before, I cannot teach your hearts, no earthly teacher can do that, it must be the work of one greater than we are, the Heavenly Teacher, and that is God the Holy Spirit.

But people don't always understand this. A girl whom I know attended a Bible Class held by a London clergyman, and as she went to it a great change came over her. She learned to see the love of God which had followed her all along, she learned also to see the carelessness and sinfulness of her past life, and she grieved to find what a disobedient child she had been to the great Father. This drew her to Jesus to seek from Him the pardon she needed. And from that time she gave herself to her Lord, and set to work earnestly to struggle against her quick temper and other faults. I remember she wrote me a letter to tell me of the great change which had come to her, and she also went to her friend the clergyman to speak to him about it. She felt quite sure then, I think, that he had taught her what she now knew. Well, he listened full of thankfulness as she described how different she had become since she had joined the Bible Class. "I have learned to see everything in quite a new way since you have taught

me," she exclaimed. And what did the clergyman answer? He pointed out to her that it was not he who had done so much for her, it was all due to the Heavenly Teacher. "I cannot teach your heart," he said, "but the Holy Spirit took my words, and taught you through them, let us thank Him for it;" so together they knelt and thanked God the Holy Ghost, for His wonderful teaching, and prayed that He might go on to show the young girl far, far more than she yet knew.

Now you and I need the teaching of the Holy Spirit very much, and I think we need it chiefly in three ways. We want Him to teach us about God the Father, about God the Son, and about ourselves. See John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Yes; (1) *we want the Holy Spirit to teach us in our hearts about God the Father.* What mistakes many people do make about Him? They believe the Son, the Lord Jesus, to be full of love, and tenderness, and mercy, but the Father they think of as a hard, stern, Judge, easily moved to anger, looking out to see what is done wrong. I do not mean that they would use these words in speaking of God, but this is the idea of Him which they have in their hearts.

A child whom I know had been taught that God saw her always, and the thought of His all-seeing eye had taken great hold of her. One day she came to her mother with a grave, frightened face and said: "Is it true that God cuts a hole in the sky on purpose to look through it at me, when I am naughty?" Of course that was a little girl's childish way of putting it, but I believe that many older people make the same mistake. They think that God's eye is on them, *most of all*, when they have done evil, they do not

understand the Fatherly love and tenderness which make Him on the look out, not for their falls, but for their victories, not for their sins, but for their struggles.

Of course God sees both, but surely He seeks to find the good in His children rather than the evil.

I know of a very religious, earnest man in London, a Scripture reader, who spends much of his time in praying with the sick, and in visiting the poor in their homes, and speaking to them of God. But what mistakes this man does make about the Father in Heaven, and what harm his mistakes are doing. He has several children, some of whom are growing up, leading thoughtless, careless lives, and causing him much anxiety. And he often speaks to them of God, but what does he say about Him? Does he tell the erring ones of the Heavenly Father's love, patience, and tenderness, of how He is waiting, longing, yearning for them to come back to Him. Does he tell them that if they will go on in lives of sin, they are themselves choosing that awful ending beyond the grave, where the unrepentant have to be banished from the Father's presence.

No, far from it; he tells them only, over and over again, that "God will send them to Hell for ever," that "God will burn them in flames of fire," that "God's anger will descend upon them," if they do not change, and his words are hardening them only, that is all. Surely this man needs the Heavenly Teacher to show him what his Heavenly Father is like.

Have you ever had thoughts about God something like his? If so, I tell you that they are false. Oh ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to know in your hearts Him who is so merciful, so full of pity, that the Bible tells us "He is love" (1 John iv. 8). Say to the Holy Spirit, "That which I see not, teach Thou

me" (Job xxxiv. 32). Ask Him to show you that God is indeed *your Father*.

Girls often think that they are not God's children because they have not served Him. Only a little while ago I received a letter from a member of one of my classes saying: "I have wandered away from God, but I do want now to return to Him, and become His child." I wrote back to her that she was His child by birth and by Baptism, and that though she might have disobeyed Him, and grieved Him very much, she had not ceased, and never could cease, to be His child.

A girl does not cease to be her earthly parent's child because she has been disobedient, she may have been a bad child to him, but yet she is his child.

And it is the same with the Heavenly Father. Even if we have neglected Him, sinned against Him, disappointed Him, yet we are His children, and He is "*our Father*."

And think of all which that word "father" means. Have you ever known a very good earthly father, who has helped you to understand it? I have.

What joy he felt as the little child learned to walk, talk, and read. How gladly and proudly he pointed out to others the progress it had made. How pleased he was when friends loved it, and were interested in it. How joyfully, as it grew older, he noted the good parts in its character, its sweet temper, its truthful ways. How grieved and disappointed he was when it did wrong, how unhappy he felt when he was obliged to punish it. How hard he worked so as to give it a good education.

This all showed, did it not, the love and tenderness of an earthly father. And it was but a faint, dim picture of the far greater love and tenderness which *your Heavenly Father* feels for you.

I say again, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you about your Father in Heaven, and "the love of God shall indeed be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v. 5).

(2) *We want the Heavenly Teacher to teach us also about God the Son our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Turn once more to John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal," not only to "know God," but also "Jesus Christ whom He has sent." And see 1 Cor. xii. 3: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

Christ especially promised that the Holy Spirit, when He had come, should teach the disciples to know their Lord better. John xv. 26: "When the Comforter is come . . . He shall testify of me; that is, He shall teach you about me.

Have you not noticed that many people go to Church and to Bible Classes, and have heard often of Christ's love for us, of His death upon the Cross, of His power to save, but they do not care one bit about it all. Perhaps they sing:

"Jesu, of Thee shall be my song,  
To Thee my heart and soul belong."

or,

"I could not do without Thee,  
Oh Saviour of the lost."

But words like these, really mean nothing to them. Now, what do they need first of all? They need that the Heavenly Teacher should open their eyes and show them Jesus in His beauty, they want the Holy Spirit's teaching.

Are any here like them?

If so, you want very, very much the Holy Spirit's teaching, and He is a wonderful Teacher. See Job xxxvi. 22: "Who teacheth like Him?"

I have sometimes seen homely, simple words spoken

by uneducated men produce a wonderful effect on their hearers. Was it the words themselves which did it?

No, the speaker was looking for the help of the Heavenly Teacher, trusting to Him, and He, the Holy Spirit, took those simple words, and brought them home to the hearts of those who heard them. Truly "Blessed is the man whom Thou . . . teachest (Ps. xciv. 12).

(3) *We want the Holy Spirit to teach us about ourselves.*

How little many people know about themselves, about their characters and faults, how satisfied they are with their own goodness! "I try to do my duty, and I can do no more," they tell us, forgetting the thousands and thousands of times when a duty has come before them and they have made no effort at all to do it. Or they compare themselves with others and say, "At any rate you won't find me telling stories and getting into tempers as so and so does." And because they don't happen to be tempted to commit those two sins, they believe there is very little that is wrong in them.

Surely they need the Holy Spirit to teach them about themselves; they need Him to show them how very, very often they have sinned. Our Lord said the Heavenly Teacher would do this for us. See John xvi. 8: "The Holy Spirit shall reprove," or convince "the world of sin."

Some of us have felt the truth of those words in our own hearts. There was a time when we were quite satisfied with ourselves, and thought we did well enough as we were, then the Heavenly Teacher showed us our mistake. He pointed out to us one sin after another, He made us see that we had grieved our Father by many a word, and deed, and thought, *He led us to exclaim, "my whole life has been all*

wrong, the burden of my sins is too heavy for me to bear."

Oh, my friends, how is it with you? Are any of you proud of your good points, and satisfied with yourselves and your lives?

If so, you need the Holy Spirit's teaching about yourselves.

And as He teaches you about God the Father and God the Son, I feel sure that He will be teaching you about yourself.

When on a bright, frosty morning you have been looking at the pure white snow which covers the ground outside, does not a piece of soiled white paper or a soiled white dress seem far dirtier than it did before?

So, as the Heavenly Teacher shows you the dazzling purity, and love, and tenderness of God, your own life and your own self will in time appear to you very stained, very soiled, very different to what you thought it before. See Job xlii. 5, 6: "Now mine eye seeth Thee . . . I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

And why is the Holy Spirit such a wonderful Teacher; why can He teach us about our Father and our Saviour better than anyone else?

Because He, being Himself God, has known them from the beginning.

There is often a strange ignorance about the Holy Spirit, many hardly know anything about Him, or who He is; and yet from their childhood they have learned to say: "I believe in God the Holy Ghost," and from time to time they still repeat the solemn words, "so the Father is God, the Son is God, and *the Holy Ghost is God.*"

Then if the Holy Spirit is part of the great Three in One, if He is the third Person of the blessed



Trinity, if He is God Himself, surely He must be the best Teacher we can have about the Father and the Son.

From the beginning the Holy Spirit was present and knew all that was done by the Father and the Son.

When God created this earth of ours, the Holy Spirit was there: "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). When our Lord was baptized in the river Jordan the Holy Spirit was there, for He descended on Him in the form of a Dove. When our Lord went to meet the Devil's temptations, the Holy Spirit was there, for it was He who "led" the Lord into the wilderness. The Holy Spirit saw Him kneeling in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane; He saw Him hanging on the Cross for our sins; He saw Him rise from the grave on that first Easter morning; He saw it all, for being God He is everywhere and sees all things.

And therefore having known the Father and the Son from the beginning, He is able to teach us in our hearts about Them, as none other could do. See 1 Cor. ii. 11, 13: "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God . . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

And for this same reason, because He is God and knows all things, and knows you through and through, the Holy Spirit can teach you so wonderfully about yourselves.

What mistakes we earthly teachers often make, through not understanding and knowing the person to whom we are speaking? Sometimes we force grave talks on those who are not helped by them. Sometimes we say comforting words to those who really need stern ones, sometimes we are silent when *the other person* is yearning for sympathy and

advice, and this is because we cannot look into the hearts of those around us, we do not really know them.

With the Heavenly Teacher all is different, ever since your Baptism He has been with you, has seen right into your heart, has known your failures and sins, yes, and your good wishes and struggles too. Surely He then can teach you about yourselves. You know our Lord's promise (John xiv. 26): "The Holy Ghost . . . He shall teach you all things."

But there is yet another reason why He is such a wonderful Teacher, and that is that He is always with you. (1 Cor. iii. 16): "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So as you study God's word in this class, the Holy Spirit is with you. When you read your Bibles at home, the Holy Spirit is with you. When you pray for guidance, He is with you; when you think over some difficulty, which at present you cannot understand, He is with you. This could not be so with any earthly Teacher, could it?

And now, my friends, if you want the Holy Spirit's teaching, and I know you do want it, pray for it.

Pray that the Holy Spirit may be the real Teacher in this class. Pray that He may teach me first of all, and then ask Him to take the words read and spoken here, and bring them home to your hearts. Pray too for His teaching as you read your Bibles, ask that He may open the eyes of your souls, and give you many lessons about your Father in Heaven, your Saviour, and yourselves. Say to Him often, "That which I see not, teach Thou me."

"Thou whom Jesus from His throne  
Gave to cheer and help His own,  
That they might not be alone,  
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

## A GLAD SERVICE.

Come to aid the souls who yearn  
More of truth divine to learn,  
And with deeper love to burn,  
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

Keep us in the narrow way,  
Warn us when we go astray,  
Plead within us when we pray,  
Hear us, Holy Spirit."

## VII.

### DEATH.

I WANT to talk to you this afternoon about the most awful and the most solemn thing that will ever happen to you—death.

Since the beginning of the year only, how many who then were well, and strong, and healthy, have now passed away out of our sight. Death has fetched them. Till it comes into our very midst, and touches with its cold hand one whom we have loved, it seems too often but a far-away sound. We say: "Yes, our friends must die, we must die too," but we do not take in the idea, we do not realise it.

Meanwhile Death is always busy. No doubt as I am speaking, at this very moment, someone is starting on that long journey into the unknown world, someone is dying.

Who can say when our turn will come? Oh, my friends, we don't know how we shall die, we don't know when we shall die. If we *did* know, perhaps, how very near death may be to some of us, life would become so solemn, so awful, that we should hardly be able to do our common, every-day business. And so God has hid it from us.

"Nobody knows but Jesus,  
Is it not better so,  
That no-one else but Jesus,  
My own dear Lord should know?"

But one thing we may be sure of, and that is, that unless the judgment day comes very soon, we all *shall* die. See Heb. ix. 27 "It is appointed unto men once to die."

There will certainly come to each one of us an hour when we shall have done all our common occupations for "the last time," and we shall go forth alone, out of the known into the unknown world.

"He didn't think it was the last time," said the poor widow of a labouring man who had died suddenly the day before. "He got his breakfast as usual, and went out to his work, he didn't think it was the last time." No, he was in the prime of life, a strong, healthy man; but a plank which he was crossing broke. He fell, was taken up senseless, and never spoke again.

And, as I said before, to you too "the last time" will come. You will have been to Church or to this Class for the last time. You will have seen the fields, and the woods, and the streets for the last time. You will have walked down that staircase at home for the last time. And what is more, you most likely will not know that it is the last time. May God give each one of us grace to be always ready.

Now some are followed about by the thought of death. They cannot forget it. This question is always rising in their minds. "If death were to come now, should I be ready?" A girl told me once that, when she was a child, she used to lie awake at night and cry at the thought of death, because she knew she was not fit to die. But many, instead of facing it bravely and so getting ready, stifle it, put it away. "I am too young to think much about such things" people say. "There is no good in moping over them." "It will be time enough to think of death when I am old." But will it be time enough? A little girl who had heard older people talk in this way, thought she would find out for herself whether they were right or not. So she went out into the Churchyard and there *she measured the graves.* Were they all long ones?

No, many were quite short, shorter than she was herself, for they were the graves of young children. She decided that she, at any rate, would remember death now, and get ready to meet it now.

Surely she was right.

Shall we try and realise how death might come to any of you? It might come quite suddenly, perhaps through some accident; you might go out laughing and talking, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, and you might be carried home dead, your voice silenced, and your eyes closed for ever.

Or again, some slight sickness might attack you.

At first it would cause you and your friends no anxiety. "You will be better to-morrow" they would say. But when to-morrow came the illness had grown worse, not better. The nights were becoming restless, the fever high; then would follow doctor's visits, the faces round you would seem more grave, the voices more quiet. "Shall I recover?" would be the question you most wished to ask. And perhaps the doctor's answer might be the solemn words: "No, I cannot give you any hope." And you would know that in a few days your body would be lying quiet and still in — Churchyard, and your spirit would have gone forth into the other land. How could you face it? Perhaps you would shrink from the actual dying, that is only natural, almost every one would do so.

But what I mean is, should you be afraid, afraid to meet your God? See Ps. lv. 4, 5. Would those words express your feelings? "The terrors of death are fallen upon me, fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me."

And notice this: Death will make no sudden change in us. Those who have never cared for holy things here, will not wake up quite different there.

Supposing you were to bring over from Africa &

poor ignorant savage, whose life had been spent in killing wild beasts and roaming about the woods, and were to place him in the midst of wise and clever people, with books and pictures all round him, would he enjoy it? Would he be able to read the books or understand what his wise friends said? No, he would be utterly unfitted for this new life and would dislike it intensely.

In the same way those who, while on this earth, think merely of amusement, and business, and how to get on in the world, would be quite unfitted for Heaven. They are not ready for it. They would be utterly out of place there.

Those only are ready to die who, as far as they can, have begun now to lead the life which God's servants will lead beyond the grave.

Let us try and find out what that life will be, and at the same time ask ourselves whether we are beginning to lead it now. In this way we shall be better able to answer the question "am I ready to die?"

(1) *God's servants in Heaven will love to worship Him.* Read Rev. vii. 9-13, "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb.' And all the angels stood round about the throne . . . and fell before the throne, on their faces and worshipped God, saying: 'Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.'"

Is it not a grand description? Think of the great crowd standing before the Father, the great crowd

made up of people of every nation and language, people different from each other in many ways, yet all alike in this, that their whole hearts are full of praise and thanksgiving to God.

With what gladness they worship Him.

Now, are you learning to worship God with gladness here? I don't mean, do you like singing hymns? Many people like that merely because they are fond of singing. But, as you sing, does your heart rise up to Him with real praise, and gratitude, and adoration? Are you beginning to lead a life of worship now?

A clergyman was once visiting a dying woman, and was talking to her of the Heavenly life and its glories. For some time she listened in silence, and then she said: "What I look forward to most is the worship." She had loved to worship God here, and so she had been getting ready for the more perfect worship there. How is it with you?

(2) *God's servants in Heaven will rejoice in His presence.* See Rev. vii. 15. "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." And to them "His presence is fullness of joy" (Ps. xvi. 11), for they love Him very, very much.

Again, how is it with you? Does the thought of God seeing you, of God being near you here, cause you joy? Does it shed sunshine and brightness over your life just because you love your Heavenly Father?

Or, does the knowledge of His presence trouble you, and make you rather uncomfortable?

(3) *God's servants in Heaven will serve Him day and night* (see Rev. vii. 15). We do not know what they will do for Him, but we do know that to fulfil His bidding, to carry out His will, to obey Him, will be their chief wish. "They shall serve Him day and night."



Are you then getting ready for this part of the life in Heaven by really beginning to serve Him now? What are you doing to please Him? How are you obeying Him? are you *trying* to do His will on earth as it is done in Heaven?

In short, have you at all begun here living the life which God's servants will live in Heaven? I mean the life of worshipping Him, of loving to be near Him, and of serving Him.

Again, are you ready to die?

People meet death, you know, very differently; some meet it with a sort of cold quietness. They have not been to the Saviour for forgiveness, they have not learned really to worship God, and to rejoice in His presence, and to serve Him, and yet they seem to have no fear. "God is merciful," they say, though they have never earnestly sought His mercy. And so they go from this world to the next, their souls asleep, their consciences deadened. This seems to me an awful way to die!

Others are terrified at the approach of death, and would give anything in the world to put it off, if only for a few moments.

A man who had passed his life in the service of his prince, having fallen dangerously ill, the prince went to visit him. He found him in great suffering, and at the point of death. Much touched, the prince said, "Is there anything I can do for you. Ask unhesitatingly, and do not fear that you will be refused." "Prince," replied the sufferer, "there is but one thing I want, give me a quarter of an hour of life, only that." "Alas," said the prince, "what you ask I cannot do." "I have served you," cried the dying man, "for fifty years, and you cannot give me one quarter of an hour of life. Ah, if I had served the *Lord thus faithfully*, He would have given me not a

quarter of an hour of life, but an eternity of happiness."

Others, again, know that death is close, and yet are quite happy, quite bright, quite peaceful. I like to speak to you of them. See Phil. i. 21, that tells us what they feel, "For me . . . to die, is gain." It is gain to change toil for rest, tears for joy, temptation for sinlessness, clouds and storms and darkness for the land which has no need of the sun because "the glory of God" shines there, and "the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. xxi. 23).

A very holy woman on her death-bed was taking leave of her doctor. "Good bye," he said, "I shall not see you again." "Then do you really think I am going?" asked she. "Yes."—"To-day?" "Probably," said the doctor. "Beautiful! too good to be true," was her reply. As her relations knelt by her bedside watching the spasms of pain, which from time to time came over her, and praying that God would give her peace, she said "I have peace, but its Himself I am longing for."

And at the last her words were "There, now it is all over. Blessed rest."

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints" (Ps. cxvi. 15).

Oh, my friends, don't listen to stories of this kind and merely think "it would be beautiful to die like that."

Begin rather now to get ready.

About 200 years ago, a rich man whose godlessness had attracted much attention, was supposed to be dead. "Our master is gone," said one of his servants to a friend. "Where to?" was the answer. "To Heaven of course," replied the servant. "No, that he is not," said the friend. "Why not?" "Because Heaven is a great way off, and when he was going a

long journey he used to talk about it beforehand, and prepare for it. But no one ever heard him talk about Heaven or make any preparation for reaching it; he cannot therefore be gone there." The rich man recovered from his illness, and this conversation was told to him. It struck him very much, and made him begin the preparation which he had neglected.

If any of you have done little or nothing to prepare for your journey into the distant Land, the thought that "it is appointed unto men once to die," should indeed cause you to tremble.

But there is One who can take from you your fear and can make you ready. See Heb. ii. 15: "He can deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

It is sin which makes people afraid to die. Sin dulls their hearts, sin has come between them and God, and prevents them from being able to worship Him. Sin makes them fear His presence rather than rejoice at it, sin unforsaken, unrepented of, keeps them back from serving Him. "THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN" (1 Cor. xv. 56), and Jesus can deliver you from the fear of death by taking away your sins, by washing white the dark stains, and by giving you power for the future to resist sin. And, oh, He wants so much to do so! He is looking down to-day into each heart. He is longing to give His peace to each one who has not yet got it. Will you let Him? Will you go to Him as your Saviour, will you take Him as your Master?

I am terribly afraid lest some of you may leave this class to-day with that old thought still in your hearts: "it will be time enough to give myself to Christ when I am dying, I can prepare for death then." I fear that idea will have ruined many. I *fear that numbers will be in Hell because they trusted*

to a death-bed repentance which never came. How can I warn you strongly enough? How can I make you believe that in nine cases out of ten a dying person cannot think, or pray, or repent? A friend of mine who died some time ago, passed away without ever having an idea that she was dying. She began to wander before she knew, or anyone knew, that she was seriously ill, and in two days she was dead.

So it is with many. So it may be with you. You may die suddenly. You may be too weak to remember anything. You may be delirious, how then could you prepare to meet your God? And therefore I plead with you very, very earnestly to get ready now.

“Now is the appointed time, now is the day of salvation.”

Perhaps ere long it will be said to you too, “The Master is come and calleth for you” (John xi. 28). “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching” (Luke xii. 37). They have even now the peace which passeth all understanding.

## VIII.

### SIN.

OUR talk last week about Death was a very solemn one. I know it has caused some of you to look into your own hearts, and question yourselves about your state before God.

Now, as we saw, "the sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56). Unforgiven sin keeps people back from God, makes them not ready to die. Let me therefore take sin as my subject for this afternoon.

Many girls, as they go to Church or to a Bible Class, get through what they hear there, a wish to be better. "I do want to be different," "I do want to serve Christ," they say.—Thank God for it. It is He who has given them this wish. It is He who is giving some of you this wish now.

Then they begin to try and serve Him, but somehow they don't get on much. "I can't tell what is the matter with me" they say, "I should like to lead a Christian life, and yet I don't seem able to do it." The joy which Christ promises to His servants has not come into their hearts. They do not care much to pray, the Bible seems rather a dull book to them. Plainly something is the matter with them, *what is it?*

Is it because there are "so many temptations" in the place where they live? I think not. God is with them there and is ready to give them all the strength they need.

Is it that they are "different to other people, and *can never become real Christians?*" God forbid. But

what is it? Something is keeping them back, what is it?

Most likely it is that they have not yet got the forgiveness of their *past sins*, and those past sins are coming between them and God. They cannot worship Him, or rejoice in Him, or obey Him; their sins are like a heavy burden dragging them back, preventing them getting on. If asked "Are you forgiven, are you ready to die?" they will answer "I don't know, how can one tell?" They say on Sundays "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," but they have never really faced the question: "Are mine forgiven?" They have thought only of the future and the right things they are going to do; they have forgotten the past and the wrong things already done.

Is it so with any of you?

Those of you who have read *Pilgrim's Progress* will remember how Christian started for the Heavenly City, with a burden on his back. You may have seen pictures of him weighed down by it. What was it? It was the burden of his past sins. And that burden kept him back, made his journey slow, and painful, and sad, till at last he came to the Cross. There, as he looked in faith to the Crucified Saviour, the burden with its awful weight was loosed. It fell from him, and he heard the joyful words "thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." Then was Christian glad, then there was nothing to keep him back, then he could press forward on the Heavenly journey. "When thou hast set my heart at liberty, then will I run in the way of Thy commandments" (Ps. cxix. 32).

May you too get rid of this burden and know something of this joy. So will you be prepared for death.

To-day let me talk to you about the burden of past sin, and what it is. Next week, please God, we will speak about how it can be taken away.

And our subject for this afternoon is not merely an "interesting one." It is much more than that. It is a question of life or death. That burden of sin will shut you off from God, and shut you out of Heaven, and drag you down to Hell, unless you get it taken away. Am I not right then in saying that it is a question of life and death? While I pause for a moment, will each one of you look up to God and pray that He Himself may speak straight to your hearts, and show you the awful danger of unforgiven sin? I am most anxious that our hour together, this afternoon, should not be a wasted hour for any here. (Pause for silent prayer.)

Now some feel the burden of their past sins very much, it weighs them down and makes them miserable. "I am so bad," they tell us. "I have done so many wrong things, what shall I do?" I remember once, after a class in which I had talked very gravely of the sinfulness of sin, I received a letter from a girl who had been present, and in her letter she told me that she had learned lately more about her own wickedness than she had ever known before. "I feel now how much I need a Saviour," she went on to write, "Please let me have a letter from you, all about the Lord Jesus Christ." Do any of you feel weighed down thus by the knowledge of your own sinfulness? Are you unhappy about yourselves? If so, thank God for it, however painful it may be. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who has made you feel your sins, He has been working on your heart. Jesus said He would convince people of sin (John xvi. 8), and He is doing it for you. Be thankful for it. A sense of sin and a hatred of sin, is the first step in turning to God. From it, if you let Him, the Holy Spirit will lead you to Jesus, who takes away the sins of *the world.*

On the other hand, many feel the burden of their past sins very little. They too will say "I don't know whether I am forgiven or not," but they think there is not much for God to forgive. "I've not got a bad temper" they tell us. "I always get on well with my fellow-servants." "I am so respectable, no one can say a word against me." If asked what sins they fall into most frequently, they do not know. And often they think so little of sin in themselves and others, that they will joke about it. They laugh, perhaps, when they see a drunken man reeling along the road, and are greatly amused at some "good answer" given by a friend, which was all the time a lie.

An old woman whom I used to visit many years ago, told me once that she was quite happy in her mind, she had always led a good life, and, like Samuel, she could say "Whose ox have I taken? Whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded or oppressed?" (1 Sam. xii. 3.) She forgot that confined to her one little room, she could not possibly be tempted to such sins as these. In remembering the evil deeds she had *not* done, she forgot all the wrong things she *had* done, and said, and thought, during her eighty years of life. Like a soldier, who gets so used to the weight of his knapsack that he hardly knows it is there, she had got so used to the burden of her sins, that she hardly felt it, and had no idea how great it was.

Are any of you like this? Do you feel your burden of past sin very little? Do you think it light? If so, your Lord says this is merely because you are blind; the sins are there, only you don't see them. Read His solemn words to you (Rev. iii. 17, 18) "Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,



and naked. I counsel thee . . . to anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

You know it is the holiest people who feel most the badness of sin. In some of our back courts in the East end of London there is little else but drinking, swearing, stealing, fighting; the women, many of them, lead the worst and most awful life which a woman can lead. Yet the inhabitants of these places think very little of their sins, to them they do not seem bad. We, who have had a different bringing up, turn in horror from such wickedness. I hope we do not turn from them, poor things; I hope we would do anything to help them, but we are right in shuddering at their sins, it is awful, it is loathsome.

My friends, God shrinks from our sins far more than we can shrink from theirs. He does not shrink from us, never think He does. He loves the poor sinner most deeply, most tenderly. But He also hates his sin more than we can tell. And why? Because He Himself is so perfectly holy, so holy that the holy Angels hide their faces in awe before Him. Even the blue sky which seems to us so pure and clear, "even the Heavens, are not clear in His sight." What must He then think of us? How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job xv. 15, 16.)

Let us try and find out from the Bible what God looks on as sin. I think we shall see that He calls, by that word, many things of which we have thought very little. And before we go any further, will you not take Job's words as your own, "Lord, how many are my sins? Make me to know . . . my sin" (Job xiii. 23). I will once more pause a moment, that you may say these words to God in your hearts.

And now see (Prov. x. 19) "*In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,*" as I said to you some time

ago, "how many words we each speak!" perhaps millions in a week, what a number at the end of a month, what a number at the end of a year. What a "multitude of words" altogether. And "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." It is true, you know it, out of all those words have there not been many sinful ones? Some were cross words, some unkind words, some untrue words, those were sin. And remember it is written "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4).

Again, see Prov. xxi. 4, "*A high look and a proud heart is sin.*" Have you ever looked down on others and thought them hardly worth speaking to because you lived in better service than they, or because your father was a farmer or a tradesman, whilst theirs was different? Perhaps as you felt this, you did not think there was much harm in it. You said "I keep myself to myself," and you were rather pleased when others said you were "high." But the Bible says, "a high look and a proud heart is sin."

Or perhaps the thought has sometimes come to you "I am much holier than so and so, I have not such a temper, I never tell lies, I am a communicant." Let me again remind you that "a high look and a proud heart is sin," and "the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Again, see Prov. xxiv. 9, "*The thought of foolishness is sin.*" How many foolish thoughts we have all had, foolish vain thoughts about our dress, and our looks, and our cleverness. Foolish thoughts too about what others are thinking of us. Even in Church have not these foolish thoughts sometimes come into your heart, so that when you seemed to be praying you were perhaps wondering whether someone was noticing you, or admiring your new bonnet. And to you, this

did not seem very bad. But the Bible says "the thought of foolishness is sin," and "the wages of sin is death," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Again, see James iv. 17, "*To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" Have you not known of good things which you ought to have done? Have you not known, for instance, that you ought to spend some of your money in leading others to God, by giving regularly to Missionary Societies, and yet perhaps you have not done it? "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Or you have known of kind things you might have done, bits of extra work to help a fellow-servant, unselfish actions that would have given pleasure to a friend, and yet often you have not done them. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," and "the wages of sin is death," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Again, see 1 John iii. 4, "*Sin is the breaking or transgression of the law.*" Now, as our time is going, let us take only one of God's laws: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength (Mark xii. 30).

Have you kept that law? Have you given God the first place in your affections, which is the one He ought to have? Have you loved Him very much? Have you loved Him better than your father or mother, or brother, or sister, or friend? Have you loved Him with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your soul, and all your strength? If not, you have broken His law, and that was sin." "Sin is the breaking of the law," and "the wages of sin is death," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

I will only ask you to look out one more passage about sin. I think it is the most awful one of all. See 1 John v. 17, "*All unrighteousness is sin.*" This

seems stronger even than the others, does it not? All those faults about which you thought: "I couldn't help doing it," "one can't be so particular as all that," "such little things don't matter," those too were — sin, for all unrighteousness is sin. All the prayers hurried over, all the Bible reading carelessly done, or left out altogether, all the idleness which made you get up late in the morning, all the waste of your master's things, all the work slurred over and half done, all this and much more was sin; for "all unrighteousness is sin," and "the wages of sin is death," and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Are you thinking "But almost everybody does these things without even trying to give them up. I shan't be worse off than they." If so, you remind me of two lads, members of a Bible Class, who were talking to their teacher about the sin of drink, into which one of them fell very often. To excuse himself, Jem said: "But I only do what Charlie does" (Charlie was his great friend), "I only go where he goes." "Then," said the other boy, who was listening, "If Charlie goes to hell, do you mean to go there too?" The boy was right, his answer was a true one.

Surely sin is an awful thing. It is indeed only "*fools* that make a mock at sin" (Prov. xiv. 9).

Now I want you very much to spend this week in trying to find out your sins, and, to help you, I have got for each of you a little book of self-examination questions<sup>1</sup>. Will you read a small piece of it over very solemnly, and very quietly, every night, till you come to the end. The questions referring to one commandment would be quite enough for a night's reading, and at that rate it would take you ten days to finish the book. Before you begin, don't forget to pray for the

<sup>1</sup> "Self-examination Questions," edited by the Rev. G. Wilkinson, Bishop of Truro, (price 2d.) is very suitable for giving away.

Holy Spirit's teaching. He alone can show you your sins. Say the words of Job, which I told you before: "Lord, how many are my sins? Make me to know my sin." Then pause after each question, to think whether you have done, or said, or felt the thing it asks you about. And put a pencil mark by the side of those questions which remind you of some sin into which you have fallen. That will help you to remember it, and so to repent of it. Perhaps, when you begin to use the little book, you may be like those people of whom I spoke to you a few minutes ago, you may see only a few sins in yourself.

You know how, at first, when you go into a darkened room, you see almost nothing. The tables, and chairs, and sofas are there, but you would not know it. Then after a while, the things seem to clear themselves up, you can see them quite plainly.

I hope it will be like this with your own hearts. Be very sure the sins are there, whether you see them or not. And I trust that you will get to see them, if you use these questions earnestly with prayer to God. I believe the Holy Spirit Himself will help you to see them, till you feel inclined to say: "My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head."

And now may I ask you a very solemn question? Is the burden of all this past sin taken away, or is it still upon you, making you unfit to die, keeping you back from serving God? Is it true of you that these sins, being unforgiven, "have hid God's face from you" (Is. lix. 2), and do you feel "Therefore am I troubled at His presence, when I consider, I am afraid of Him" (Job xxiii. 15)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A girl, quite unknown to me, who read a book of mine and became troubled about her sins, once wrote to me and told me of her difficulties. If any girl who reads this would like to do the same, and has no *clergyman* or other friend to turn to, I should be very glad to hear from her. Address: Miss E. Lewis, 5 Cadogan Square, London.

If so, remember that "at His wrath the earth shall tremble" (Jer. x. 10). My friends, this is an awful subject. But face it, face the sins, seek them out. Spend this week in getting to know them, that you may repent of them. Surely you must repent of them when you remember that each sin has grieved the tender heart of your Heavenly Father.

And as you examine yourselves, praying "Lord, how many are my sins? Lord make me to know my sin," don't forget to think also of His love who was nailed to the Cross for our evil doing. It is at the foot of that Cross that we learn best to feel how bad sin is, we see there what it cost Him, what it made Him suffer.

Dear friends, I have only one moment in which to remind you that God wants to forgive you, that it was He who gave the Lord Jesus to pay the wages of your sin. Christ has died instead of you. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29). He offers you a full, free pardon, you can take it this week, you can take it now, if you will.

Next Sunday I hope to talk much to you about Him and His pardon. It will be a more joyful subject than the one we have had to-day. It will be sweet to tell you again "the old, old story" of His love, and of His longing to forgive you and save you.

God grant that each one here may turn earnestly from sin to Jesus and so learn to say, like Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*, when the burden was taken away:

"He hath given *me* rest by His sorrow, and life by His death."

## IX.

### PARDON.

SINCE we met here last week, I hope you have been reading over those self-examination questions. I hope you have been thinking much, and praying much about your sins. If so, probably many of you have found out that you have more sins than you thought, that your burden of sin *is* heavy, is weighing you down, is keeping you from God, is making you afraid to meet Him. "What shall I do be saved," how can I get God's forgiveness? This is the question which I know many of you are asking; and truly "if our . . . sins be upon us . . . how should we then live?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 10), for, as we saw last week, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

But God does not wish that any soul should "die." He does not wish to pass that awful sentence of condemnation on you, or anyone else. He so loved the world of sinners, that He gave His own dear Son to die instead of us. The Lord Jesus received the wages of our sin, even death. Is it not clear then that God does not want to condemn you? To make it still more clear, He says so:

(See Ezek. xxxiii. 11) "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for *why* will ye die?"

So God longs to forgive, and you long for His pardon—"Turn ye," then, "from your evil ways."

*But are you ready to do that? Are you ready to*

forsake all sin ? Are you ready to try and give up all that's wrong, even if it is pleasant ?

If not, God cannot forgive you ; there must be the turning from sin before there can be the pardon of sin. Forgiveness is impossible as long as you are keeping one sinful thing back from God, and saying to yourselves : " I cannot settle to give that up."

A clergyman was once speaking to a lady who was very unhappy about herself and her state before God. She felt deeply the sins of her past life ; she knew that they were yet unforgiven, and she had come to ask the clergyman for his prayers and his help.

He spoke to her of God's tender love, and of His willingness to forgive. He spoke of Christ's death upon the Cross for our sins, and of the pardon offered through Him, but his words seemed to bring her no comfort. He then paused and added, " Excuse me for saying so, but I think there is something you are not willing to give up, or to do." After a few minutes silence she burst out weeping afresh, and then with a terrible struggle she said, " I have an enemy, whom I cannot forgive !" The clergyman told her that as long as she was keeping angry, revengeful, sinful thoughts in her heart, God could not pardon her ; and he pleaded with her to give them up and to be reconciled with the enemy who had wronged her. She made the effort. She resolved that with God's help she would meet as a friend him whom she had hitherto shunned as an enemy. She fought against her hard, unkind thoughts, and from that time she was able to accept God's pardon, now fully held out to her, and peace flowed into her soul.

In the same way girls are often willing to forsake many of their sins, but yet want to keep one wrong thing back.

Perhaps they, too, have had a quarrel, and will not



make it up. "I can't forgive that," they say, or they tell us "I can forgive, but I can't forget," which really means that they are keeping in their hearts all sorts of bitter, angry feelings against the person who has offended them. Whilst they do so, God's forgiveness cannot come to them. We must be ready first to turn from all our evil ways.

Others want to give up being angry, and untruthful, and selfish, but they can't make up their minds to go to the Holy Communion. "I know I ought to go," they say, "but nobody else does in the house where I live, and I can't face all the teasing which I should have to meet." They, too, are keeping one thing back from God, and, as long as they do that, they cannot expect to get His pardon.

Others, again, have a lover of whom their mistresses or their parents disapprove. They meet him in an underhand way, knowing all the time that this deceit is wrong. "I want to serve God," they would say, "but I can't give up my friend," and so from them too, as long as they act thus, God's pardon is shut off.

Have *you* any sin which you are keeping back from God? Have you any wrong thing which you are not willing to forsake? If so, God's forgiveness cannot come to you, the burden of your past sins cannot be taken away, because you are not willing to turn from all your evil ways.

Resolve then now to give up this sin, whatever it is, or it may be your ruin. Christ urges you to put it away, to cut it off, however much it may cost you to do so. "Cut it off," He says, even if it is to you like your right hand, "cut it off"; "for it is better to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell" (Mark ix. 43). "What shall it profit you to *gain* the whole world, and lose your own soul?"

(Mark viii. 36), "Turn ye from your evil ways, *why* will ye die?"

I cannot speak to you any more about this to-day. For the rest of our lesson I must take for granted that you are willing to turn from all sin, and are therefore able to accept God's pardon.

But perhaps some of you are feeling as a girl said to me the other day: "I am too bad. I have been so careless, so wicked. He will never receive me."

If so, turn to Isaiah lv. 6-9, and take comfort from the beautiful words there.

"Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon." Yes, He pardons abundantly, fully. We may think "He will never forgive me." But what does He say?

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Is. lv. 8). His thoughts and ways are far more pitiful, and tender, and loving than ours. "For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Therefore He is willing to forgive the most sinful, as soon as they are willing to turn from sin. Take courage, then, you that are weighed down by the evil that you have done. "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace" (Is. lv. 12).

You remember in our Lord's parable how the father went to meet his sinful son when he was yet a long way off. He went to meet him as soon as he turned homewards. He received him gladly with a kiss. He never said one word to him about his past. And this is a picture of the way in which God will receive you.

God, then, is ready, waiting, longing to forgive, if you will turn from all that is evil.

*But how are you to get the forgiveness which He offers you?*

You know John the Baptist preached to the people a great deal about their sins. He talked of the badness of sin, and the danger of sin, choosing very much the subjects of which we have been thinking lately. "Flee from the wrath to come" (Matt. iii. 7). "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). These were his texts. Then when the people had learned to feel the badness of sin, what did He say to them? He was preaching out of doors. His hearers stood under the blue sky to listen. As he was speaking, he saw the Lord Jesus walking in the distance, and pointing to Him, he exclaimed:

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29). John had helped to show the people their sins, he could do no more; he could not take them away. Jesus only could do that. That was why John pointed them to Him.

If I have helped to show you your sins, I thank God for it, I can do no more. Except that I too can point you to Jesus, who will take them away. I want to do that this afternoon. I want to show you now, how it is only the crucified hand which can loose your burden. Will you look up to Him in silent prayer and ask Him to teach you how He "is able to save?" (Pause for silent prayer.)

He whom John saw that day, He whom John called "the Lamb of God," died for your sins. He went back to Heaven with the marks of your sins upon Him. Oh, say over, altogether, the words you all know so well.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities . . . , and with His stripes we are healed . . . the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liii. 5, 6). Say them over again, changing

the "our" into "my," till you get to feel and understand them more. "He was wounded for *my* transgressions, He was bruised for *my* sins, with His stripes I am healed . . . the Lord hath laid on Him my iniquity." Each one of us can say that. Each one of you who have told me that your past sins are making you miserable, can know that for those very sins He was wounded. And so through Him "is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38).

And He, that Holy One, is near us now, He is here to-day, because we are gathered together in His Name, and He has a *message for you*. What is He saying to you ?

(See Matt. xi. 28) "COME UNTO ME, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

You are laden with sin, you are weary with carrying that weight, you are longing for rest. Is it not so ? Then these words are spoken to *you*. Oh, have they not a new meaning, as you listen to them now ? You have heard them often before. Did they ever seem so spoken to you, and meant for you, as they do this afternoon ? "I will give you rest." He has given rest to thousands, to millions. I know it. I have seen many receive it from Him, because they went to Him with their weight of sin, simply trusting Him, and taking Him at His word.

Yes, and the rest, the peace He gives, does not fail people at the hour of death.

"Fetch me Lord Jesus. All is well. I shall soon be home, no suffering there," were the words not long ago spoken by a dying man, who had found Christ's pardon, and Christ's rest.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," said a little child a few moments before his spirit passed away into the

Saviour's keeping. "Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me," *they do*, added he, as he looked up into his mother's face for the last time on earth.

"Come unto Me," He is saying to you, "and I will give you that rest." But how are you to come to Him. Turn to Matt. viii. and you will see how people came to Him when He was on earth (read verses 2, 3). This man was a leper; he had that awful disease which cut a person off from his friends, which made him be shunned by all he met, which forced him to live alone, and cry "unclean, unclean," when any one approached. What happiness could he find in life, till the disease was taken away? To be healed, that was his great need. No doubt he had heard of the cures Jesus had wrought, so what did he do? He *came to Jesus* (verse 2), and notice, he came believing in Him, trusting Him. He knows that Jesus can do what he wants. "Thou canst make me clean," he says. He is right, the answer he receives is "I will, be thou clean," and he "was cleansed."

Again, read verses 5, 6, 7. This centurion wanted something, not for himself, but for another. His servant was very ill, and his great wish seemed to be that the servant should recover. What did he do? He *came to Jesus* (verse 5) for what he wanted, and he too came believing in Him, trusting Him. The centurion knew the Lord was powerful, and therefore able to help him. He knew He was tender and loving, and therefore willing to do it. So he trusted Him fully, "Speak the word only," he said, "and my servant shall be healed." "The servant was healed in the self-same hour."

Again, read verses 23-26. The disciples were with Jesus in a ship when a storm rose, and the ship was *tossed up and down in the waves*. A great fear seized *the disciples*; at once *they came to Jesus* (verse 25), the

Master in whom they believed and trusted. "He can help us we know," this was their feeling, so they say to Him: "Lord save us, we perish." "Then He arose and rebuked the winds, and there was a great calm."

So all these people, the leper, the centurion, and the disciples needed something, and they all came to Jesus for it, simply believing in Him, and trusting Him (for those two words mean much the same thing). And in each case He gave them what they wanted.

Now you, too, want something, you want the forgiveness of your sins; then *come to Jesus*, just as they did. You can do so. He is as near to you, though you cannot see Him. He hears you as distinctly as He heard them. He will help you as lovingly as He helped them. Oh come to Him and tell Him about your sins; tell Him that you know your past life has been all wrong. Tell Him how sorry you are for it, and ask Him to take away your sins.

"Lord, I confess to Thee sadly my sin,  
All I am tell I Thee, all I have been;  
Purge Thou my sins away,  
Wash Thou my soul this day,  
Lord, make me clean."

And come as those people did, trusting Him. He says "I will give you rest." Trust Him. It is not trusting Him to come, and then afterwards to say "I don't know whether He has forgiven me or not." That is to doubt His word. Oh, come to Him because He calls you. Come to Him because He loves you, come to Him because He died for you, come to Him because your sins will shut you out of Heaven, unless He takes them away. It is

"Only a step to Jesus,  
Then why not take it now!  
Come, and your sins confessing,  
You shall receive a blessing;  
Do not reject His mercy,  
Oh, why not take it now!"

"Only a step to Jesus!" That step is the turning away from all sin of which we spoke at first.

But perhaps you are still thinking, "If I do come will He receive me? How shall I know that He has received me?"

That question was once asked of a clergyman by a dying man. "I have tried to serve God all my life," he said, "I have been to Jesus for forgiveness, but yet I do not feel sure I have got it. How can I know that He has received me?"

"From his own words," replied the clergyman. "He has said 'Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37). Why, then, should He cast you out?"

The answer brought peace to the sick man. It can bring peace to you. "Him that cometh unto Me," Christ said, "I will in no wise cast out." Then surely He will not turn from you. Trust Him.

People sometimes wonder at others who say "I do not fear death because I believe that my sins are forgiven." These people have perhaps never noticed that the Christians in the Bible could write "We have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). "Whether we live or die we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8). These were their words. Should not Christ's people now be able to say the same? And many can, because they have taken Jesus at His word; they have come to Him, they have trusted Him, and they know He has not cast them out.

Oh give up hoping to win Heaven by your own goodness. Some of you have been looking upon it as the wages to be earned by a life of work. That it can never be. It is God's gift to us, we never could deserve it. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). Some of you *seem to me like the poor sick woman who for twelve*

years tried everything she could to make her well, except coming to Jesus, and nothing did it. At last she came to Him, and He did it (Matt. ix. 20-23).

If you have been trying to earn Heaven by yourselves, without Jesus, learn that it is impossible to do so. Have you not found it impossible? Come to Him, then, as that poor woman did. Trust Him as she did. And His words to you also will be "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee."

But perhaps your thought now is "If I did come to Him and He did cleanse me from my past sins, still I should sin again, and what then?"

Alas, this is true; we must strive against sin with all our might, and yet, and yet we do fall. Hardly a day passes but that some sin brings its stain upon our soul. And what then? Why, that you must keep coming back to Jesus to be cleansed by Him just as you came the first time. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7); it will cleanse you again. And He Himself says, "Except I wash thee, thou hast no part in Me" (John xiii. 8).

After you have once come to Him for the first great cleansing, I think you will understand better that you need a daily coming.

Oh, my friends, when you have trusted yourselves to Him, and have received His full, free pardon, when He has given you something of His peace and joy, when you can look up to Him without any fear, and can say "Lord, I am Thine, and Thou hast cleansed me," then you will know what it is really to love Him, then you will want to live for Him, then your one wish will be not to be good in order "to get to Heaven," but to be good in order to please Him who has so wonderfully loved you.

What more can I say, except this:

Come to Him *now*. As we kneel down we will have



two minutes pause for silent prayer. Try and forget each other, try and forget me. Remember Jesus only, who is here in our midst.

The people who came to Him got from Him what they needed *when they came*. And so you can get *now* from Him that forgiveness you want, if you are sincerely turning from all sin.

Oh, come to Him as that centurion did, in simple trust and faith. Trust Him, even if your heart is cold and you seem to feel nothing. Trust Him for He is waiting, longing, yearning to give you pardon. "I will give you rest," He says, take it.

"Just as we are Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
Because Thy promise we believe,  
Oh Lamb of God, we come."

Let us pray.

## X.

THOU HAST DONE THIS FOR ME. WHAT SHALL I  
DO FOR THEE ?

I WAS speaking to you last week of the sufferings which our Lord bore for our sins, of His readiness to forgive fully and freely, of the tender love with which He says to each penitent sinner, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest."

*Did* you come to Him, and has He loosed your burden of past sin? Then I know that you must be saying to-day in your hearts, "What can I do for Him who has done so much for me?" You must, I feel sure, be asking yourselves, in some way or other, that question which I suggested to you once before, and which I want to try and answer to-day: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits" (Ps. cxvi. 12).

When you have received some great kindness, some great benefit from an earthly friend, do you not long to show your gratitude to that friend as soon as you can? I am sure you do.

A lady whom I know has a class of very rough girls in one of the low parts of London. These poor girls have mostly homes made wretched by drink and poverty, they seldom hear a gentle, kind word, except from their teacher. And she, week after week, gives up her evenings to going down to the part where they live, and to holding a Bible Class for them. Of course they have become very fond of her. Well, not long ago, her father died and she was in great trouble. The girls heard of it, and their first thought was

“cannot we do something to show that we feel for her? she has been so good to us.” But what could they do? could they give her some little present? That would be very difficult, for their small earnings were all claimed by their parents. At last an idea struck them, they would make an ivy cross, and, on the day of the funeral, they would bring it and place it on the grave. I think their teacher valued that little ivy cross more than many of the beautiful hot-house flowers which were sent her at the same time. It showed her that the girls did really feel her kindness, and wanted to make her some return for it.

My friends, I believe that some of you have learned to know in your hearts our Lord's great love. I believe that some of you have received from Him pardon, and peace, and greater benefits than any earthly friend could possibly bestow. What are you going to do for Him?

“Thy life was given for me,  
Thy blood, O Lord, was shed:  
That I might ransomed be,  
And quickened from the dead;  
Thy life was given for me,  
What shall I give to Thee?”

Another hymn, which you have very often sung, says that if everything in the whole world belonged to us, and that we could give it to Jesus, it would be too small an offering, after all He has done for us.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
It were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

St. Paul must have felt this. There was nothing he was not ready to do for Jesus, in return for his Lord's wonderful love for him. See Acts xxi. 8-15. St. Luke, St. Paul, and others of the disciples had *been travelling* about, visiting the Christians in differ-

ent places. After a time they came to Cæsarea (verse 8) and lodged with a fellow Christian named Philip. Whilst they were staying in his house a visitor from Judæa came to see him. What was his name (see verse 10)? His name was Agabus, and he was a prophet, one who could foretell things which were going to pass. Whilst sitting with St. Luke and the other friends, he took up St. Paul's girdle and began to bind it round his own hands and feet (verse 11). What a strange thing to do! how surprised the disciples must have been, and how they must have wondered what he meant by it! Soon, however, they understood his meaning, for he goes on to explain it to them. St. Paul was intending to go to Jerusalem very soon, and Agabus, being a prophet, knew that if he went there the Jews would take him prisoner, and bind his hands and feet with chains. Therefore, as the surprised disciples were watching the prophet tie the girdle round his own hands and feet, he says to them: "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle" (verse 11), that is St. Paul.

The look of wonder on the faces of the disciples changes now to anxiety. They turn at once to St. Paul and beg him to alter his plans, and give up going to Jerusalem (verse 12). Tears spring into their eyes as they think of the danger which their friend will run. "He will be bound hand and foot, and put into prison, oh, *why* will he go there!" they exclaim, and one after another they beseech him to be prudent, and to take some other journey instead.

Now it is not easy to face danger and imprisonment. It is not easy to resist the entreaties of one's friends. But St. Paul believes that the Lord Jesus wishes him to go to Jerusalem, Jesus, who suffered for Him; Jesus, who has pardoned him; Jesus, who loves him, and he is willing to do anything in return.

for the Lord who has done so much for him. See then his answer (verse 13): "What mean ye, to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus." And, though his heart was breaking at their tears and prayers, "he would not be persuaded," he is going to do what Jesus wishes, not what they wish (verse 14).

I think you will agree with me that we want to be more like him, more faithful to our Lord, more anxious to show our gratitude to Him in our daily lives.

Let us then go back to ourselves and let us each ask again, what can I do for the Saviour who loves me so much?

See Col. iii. 17, it will give us an answer: "Whatever ye do . . . *do all* in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

When a girl first turns to God, and has found in Jesus pardon and peace for her past sins, then a great change must come over her. She now must "walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4).

And what must the change consist in? Of course she must do things she had hitherto neglected; for instance, she must go to Holy Communion, she must confess her Master openly, etc., and she must also try *not* to do wrong things she had done before; such, perhaps, as telling stories and losing her temper. But the chief part of the change in her does not lie here. It does not consist in doing a few new things, and giving up a few old things, but rather in doing *everything* differently. Why? Because she must now do all "in the Name of the Lord Jesus," and for Him. She will still be a house-maid, or a lady's-maid, or spend her days in business. She will do for the most part just the same things that she did before, but, as I *said, she will do them differently.* Christ's servants,

those who have lately turned to Him, and those who have been serving Him for years, are all called to do everything in His Name, and for Him.

Now some might exclaim: "What, even the little common every-day things; the stitching and the baking, and the scrubbing, and the talking, and the going to see one's friends, are all those to be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus?"

Look again at the verse, and you will see two words which make it clear; they are "whatever" and "all." Those words take in everything, don't they?

I remember many years ago a girl telling me that she saw one could go to Church and say one's prayers for Christ's sake, but she didn't see how the little jobs of every-day life could possibly be done for Him.

And yet our verse surely says they can. I think the little common things become great and grand, when they are done for the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Let me tell you a story which helps to make this clear:

A friend of mine told me that her father had decided one year to let his London house for the season, and that they were therefore obliged to move out of it just at Easter. As you can imagine, letting a house gives always a great deal to do. Some of the things must be put away, and others taken out, for the use of the tenants who are coming to the house. And lists must be made of the linen, etc., etc. Well, all this had to be done during Holy Week, the week in which Good Friday comes, and in which we keep our Lord's sufferings. And every day beautiful services were being held, and interesting sermons were being preached in the Churches, and my friend longed to go to them, but it was impossible. She had to stay at home and do a quantity of little tiresome jobs, such as

I have mentioned ; she had to make lists, put things away, lock up china ornaments, pack, etc. And as she did so, she felt quite vexed and put out to think that this dull, common-place, uninteresting work, was keeping her from Church.

Then one night she had a dream. She fancied that she stood in a beautiful garden full of lovely flowers of all sorts ; it was crowded with people, young and old, men and women and children, but she hardly noticed them, for her attention was taken up by One, round whom they all seemed to gather. That one was clothed in shining white garments, a crown of thorns was on His head, in His hands there were the marks of nails, and His face was very kind, and pitiful, and tender. In her dream even, she knew that this was the Lord Jesus Christ. And full of awe and wonder she watched to see what He was about to do.

In His hand He held a beautiful white lily in a pot, and turning to a woman who stood near Him, He gave it to her, saying at the same time : "Take this and tend it for Me." To each one He gave a flower with the same words, and the flowers were all very beautiful : bright-coloured geraniums, or sweetly scented roses, or azaleas.

Very anxiously my friend gazed at Him as He went from one to another, saying gently to each one : "Take this and tend it for Me." "Am I to have nothing," whispered she to herself ; "Is there no flower that I can tend for Him, nothing that I can do for Him?" And tears of vexation and disappointment came into her eyes. But after she had waited a long time, and last of all, the Holy One turned to her with a flower in His hand ; and what do you think it was ? Nothing but a little, common daisy.

Her first thought was "Why should I take it ? *everybody else* received a beautiful flower ; I will not

accept this miserable little daisy." Then a better feeling came into her heart: "if He gives it me to tend for Him, surely I had better take it." So she humbly put out her hand and received the plant, and just the same words were spoken to her, "Take it," said the Lord, "and tend it for Me."

Well, she took the plant home and placed it in the light, and watered it very carefully, and as she did so, behold it changed! The little homely daisy turned into a beautiful gold crown, and while she looked at it in wonder, she woke.

The next morning she went back very differently to her tiresome, commonplace duties of making lists and putting things away. They, like the daisy, were given her by the Lord Jesus Himself; they must be done in His name and for Him, and as she did them thus, they would cease to be tiresome and commonplace, and at last they too would turn into a crown.

My friends, the next time you have some little job to do which you find uninteresting and wearisome, will you remember this dream? The job is given you by Jesus Himself, it is your daisy, accept it from Him, do it for Him, and it will no longer be small and common, it will become your crown.

And now let us take a day, an ordinary day, such as you often spend, and let us go through part of it and see how each action may be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus and for Him. Of course those who are in business do not spend their hours quite like those in service. Yet most of what I shall say will apply to them too.

What is the first thing that we all have to do in the morning, a very small commonplace thing, and yet one which can be done for our Lord? I mean our "getting up." Not long ago a girl told me that she had to be down stairs at a quarter past six, and



so she got up at six, perhaps some of you are like her. If so, surely you leave but a *very* short time for the prayers which are to make you able to meet the temptations and troubles of the day! Some girls, I know, constantly omit their morning prayers altogether, just because they will not rise early enough to be able to do anything but just shuffle on their clothes and hurry down as best they can. Now to-morrow, when you are "feeling so sleepy" and are tempted to stay in bed "just five minutes longer" than is right, will you remember that even your getting up should be done in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and for Him?

Then, I suppose, as soon as you are dressed you kneel down and say the prayers which we have just mentioned. As I have already given a whole lesson about them, I will not say much to-day on the subject. You would all agree that prayers said "for Jesus" must be earnest and real, and must be said with the recollection that One is listening and can help.

Your next action, I suppose, is to go to your work. And am I not right in thinking that before breakfast you do a good deal of your work independently and alone, because those over you are not yet down. How then is it done? are you thorough and quick when no human eye is looking?

The other day I was watching some men who were picking up the street in front of our house. "How capitably they are working," said I to a friend, "there is no stopping, no talking, no dawdling, they seem to work with all their might." "Yes," replied my friend, "they have an overseer among them, and he keeps them up to the mark." What a sad explanation! And, as you know, the masters who give out work constantly find that employing an overseer answers to *them*, though they have to pay him high wages, because

the men work so much faster and better when he is there. Surely "these things ought not to be" amongst those who profess to be Christians. (See Col. iii. 22.) We are not to give eye-service, remembering only the earthly eyes watching us, like "men-pleasers."

We have a Heavenly overseer, One who is never harsh and fault-finding, One who is very tender, and patient, and ready to make excuses, but who watches each thing and wants to have it well done for Him. See verse 23: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

Will you not then dust in unnoticed corners, and sweep under the mats, and finish off your threads, and clean the coppers out thoroughly, trying to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and for Him?

In the course of time, breakfast follows. How can our verse be carried out there. I think by remembering to thank God for the food He gives us. Many people who say grace for dinner, would not think of doing so for breakfast; why, I cannot tell. Before our Lord gave the fishes and the barley loaves to His disciples, and eat of them Himself, He gave thanks; will you not do the same at breakfast, silently, in your own hearts, and then the meal will be taken in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

After breakfast the work begins again, and I shall not speak more about that. I only want to say that then you probably do it with someone else, and there may be small rubs of different kinds with those over you. Perhaps you think they find fault unnecessarily, you are inclined to be vexed and speak sharply. If so, look once more at our verse, Col. iii. verse 17: "in word," too, "do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus." "Not answering again" (Tit. ii. 9), but being gentle and patient.

Towards the middle of the day comes the dinner time.

and that I think is an hour at which, perhaps, all should be specially on the watch, to speak and to act in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Those of you who are in business probably dine altogether, and the silence which lasted during the work now ceases. The girls mix with each other, and have some pleasant talk. Let them be very careful that the conversation be such that the listening Lord would approve of.

Again, those of you who are in service in big houses meet all your fellow servants, the men as well as the women; and during the latter part of dinner, at any rate, there is of course, quite rightly, a good deal of talk. Now please don't be vexed if I say a few plain words as to your conduct towards the men-servants.

A girl may be bright, and merry, and pleasant, and popular with the men, and yet there may be, and ought to be, something about her that prevents them treating her roughly and freely. I am quite sure that the loud laughing and romping, and the rough play which sometimes takes place, is not what ought to be between men and women. You never see such "goings on" in the drawing-room between your young ladies and their gentlemen friends. If you did, I know you would be shocked and horrified. Why then should there be different manners in the servant's hall, to what you would think right in the drawing-room? When I see girls in service who look very nice, and quiet, and refined, I can hardly believe that they allow these rough ways with the men of their acquaintance, and yet I am afraid that with some of them it is the case. And it does harm. Often it is the first step downwards, and leads to everything that is worst, and it always lowers the respect which men ought to have for women, and which they do feel for *those who are gentle and womanly*. In your conduct

towards your men friends, be very careful to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," then you will be safe to be on the right side.

I think I have now said enough about how to spend a day for Jesus, I will not go further than dinner time, I only wanted to show you that each little thing can be done in His Name. You will think out the afternoon and evening hours for yourselves, won't you, and apply our text to them too.

And do not fancy that I am asking too much of you by saying that each little action should be done for our Lord.

Some time ago I went into a mission-room, the walls of which were ornamented by painted verses out of the Bible, and in front of me there were these words: "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" (Luke xvi. 5); "Even thine own self" (Philem. 19). Is it not true? He bought you at a heavy price, the price of His sufferings, therefore "glorify Him in your body as well as your spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 20). Your body was bought by Jesus, and is His. Your hands belong to Him, your lips belong to Him, so everything that those hands do, and everything that those lips say, should be done and said in His name.

Let us try and care less what other people think of us and say of us, let us seek to do all for Jesus, and look only for His "well done," surely, surely we may be satisfied with that.

So now, have we not found out of the Bible the answer to our question: "what can I do for Him who has done so much for me?" and the answer is, do everything for Him.

He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them" (2 Cor. v. 15).

Aim at doing each action for Him. There is no

real happiness or blessedness in trying for anything short of that. A half and half Christian who wants to do a few things for her Lord, but who never dreams of trying to do all, has no joy in her religion, and no power of winning others over to her Master's side.

As we seek to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, there will, of course, be many failures. Often and often, alas, we shall forget, and fall, and stain our souls with sin. Often and often as we look back at night upon the day that is just past, we shall find that during its hours we have done sadly little in the Name of our Master. Then go back humbly to His feet; remember that He suffered for your sins under the dark shadows of those trees in Gethsemane, and on the Cross of pain; remember that your sins were then laid on Him, and ask Him to cleanse you from their stains, and to help you next day: "whatsoever you do . . . to do all in His Name and for Him."

## XI.

### HOLY COMMUNION (1).

HAVE you ever lost a parent or a very dear friend? If so, were you with him or her in that last sad illness? Did you hear the doctor's solemn verdict, "he has only a few more hours to live." And did you sit by his bedside, straining your ears to catch any words that the weak voice might speak, fearful lest you should miss some farewell, some last wish? Then you know how you value the remembrance of those last hours. You know how those last words seem to have printed themselves into your heart, so that you can never, never forget them. You know how that last wish is to you more sacred than any other. What was it?

Perhaps your dying friend put into your charge one whom he was leaving behind, and said, "be a sister to her." If so, I feel sure you are trying to carry out his request.

Perhaps he asked you to lead a Christian life, and meet him again in Heaven. If so, I am certain that in your better hours his wish keeps you back from sin, and urges you to holiness. For last moments, last words, last wishes are to us all very solemn. The voice that spoke them seems to repeat them again from the great land beyond the grave, and we cannot help listening.

To-day we are going to read about the last moments and the last wish of our best Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are going to read words which He spoke some fifteen hours before he was nailed to the Cross.

Our Master's dying words! Let us study them quietly and solemnly. Let us learn to feel about them as we should have felt, had we been there. For though we were not there, He did indeed speak them to us.

Read Matt. xxvi. 26-29. You remember how, on that Thursday evening, the day before His death, our Lord and His disciples had met together in an upstairs room, furnished and prepared, there to keep the Passover.

When the feast was ended, the Lord took from the table in front of them some bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Apostles, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body." Then He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood." "This do in remembrance of Me." "This do," that was His dying wish; that was the wish He spoke only a few hours before He hung on the Cross.

Now some of you have not yet been confirmed, and perhaps you are thinking "this dying wish of Christ's has nothing to do with me, I can't obey it, I feel no interest in it." Do not say that. Before very long you will have an opportunity of being confirmed. And then, you too will be able to carry out your Lord's last words.

So look forward to going to the Holy Communion. If you knew that a great gift, say one hundred pounds, was to be given you next spring, you would look forward to it, would you not? You would often talk and think of the time when it would be yours, and you would settle long beforehand how you should spend it, and what you should do with it. Well, by next Easter, or next Whitsuntide perhaps, you will have offered to you in the Holy Communion a very great gift. If you go faithfully, our Lord will there *come to you*, and give Himself to you. Then look

forward to it, and begin now to prepare for it. Say often "Oh, God, make me fit to receive this great gift; make me value it rightly."

To-day I want to point out to you all how very, very important it is that Christ's servants should go to the Holy Communion, and I have thought of three reasons why this is so. Of the first one I have already spoken to you. What was it? The Holy Communion is very important :

(1) *Because it was our Lord's last wish.* I have not time to say anything more about that. The next reason why it is so important is :

(2) *Because it is His plain Command* (see again Matt. xxvi. 26, 27), "Take, eat," our Lord says, "Drink ye all of this ;" "Do this in remembrance of Me." Can anything be plainer? And yet many who call themselves Christ's servants, seldom or never, think of obeying these words. How strange! Are we to pick and choose out of our Master's orders, and say: "I will do that, but not this." Dares a soldier act in such a manner towards his captain? No, indeed, every order must be obeyed, every command carried out. I sometimes hear people say, "So-and-so, who doesn't go to the Holy Communion, is a very good Christian, quite as good as those who do go." But how can that be? How can we be good servants of the Heavenly Master, and yet, day after day, week after week, month after month, go on disobeying what is not only His last wish, but also His plain command?

Sixteen and seventeen hundred years ago Christ's servants were ready to run any risks in order to go to the Holy Communion. On all sides enemies were watching them in order to take their lives as soon as it could be proved that they were Christians. And nothing proved it so clearly as their being Communicants.



Nevertheless, early in the morning, before working hours began, they would leave their homes and pass openly and quietly along the streets, to the place where the feast was spread, and the Master's command was to be obeyed. Very often spies would follow them, and when they had made sure where they were going, would take them prisoner and lead them before a judge. And he would pronounce sentence of death upon them, just because by going to the Holy Communion they had shown themselves to be Christ's servants. Yet nothing then could keep the Christians from obeying their Master's plain command.

My friends, the command was spoken to you as much as to them. Ought you not also to obey it?

But I do not want you to feel merely "I ought to go, I must go." It has been well said that Christ's servants should not ask "*Must* I go?" but "*May* I go?" for it is a wonderful blessing. And this brings me to the third reason why the Holy Communion is so important:

(3) *Because it is a very great help.* As the clergyman passes from one communicant to another along the altar rails, giving them the sacred Bread and Wine, Jesus Himself comes to the souls of His faithful servants, (John vi. 48) "I am that Bread of Life," He says. There He comes to us and dwells in us. (John vi. 56.) There He fills our hearts with His own life (John vi. 55, 57), and pours into us some of His own great strength, and love, and earnestness, so that there we get from Him what we need for our daily struggle. Is this hard to understand?

Let me tell you a story which may help to make it clearer. My story is an allegory or parable, in which everything has a second meaning. I think you will easily be able to tell me what that second meaning is.

There was once a beautiful garden which belonged to a great Prince. Lovely flowers grew there, and shrubs with scented blossoms on them, and broad gravel walks ran between these flower-beds. At the further end of the garden was a clear river, and beyond the river lay some mountains, which looked quite blue in the distance. But the Prince had an enemy who tried hard to spoil this pleasant spot. He had laid traps and dug pit falls for people to tumble into, and he had made the animals which prowled about at nights very cruel and fierce.

Now a great many men, and women, and children lived in this garden, but it was a rule of the Prince's that no-one might stay in the same part of it all his life long. They had each to pass by the rose trees, along the gravel walks, through the shrubbery and across the river, till at last they were lost to sight in the distant blue mountains. Some managed the journey better than others, and reached the end in safety; some again fell into the traps, or were torn to pieces by the wild beasts.

Lily, a cripple girl of about eighteen, looked forward to her journey with much dread; she knew that she should find it very hard, for her knees and ankles were weak, and she easily got tired. Then, too, she had no friends to be with her, and her parents had gone before. So she often felt lonely, and sad, and hopeless, as she thought of what lay in front of her.

As she was starting the Prince of the garden came and spoke to her very gently and kindly. "I shall always be near you," he said, "though you will not see me." And then he went on to tell her of a very great help which he had provided for the travellers through the garden. "At a distance of about a mile from each other," said he, "I have planted a vine or grape tree. Each time you pass one of these vines,

remember me, who placed it there, and pick some of the fruit. As you put it to your lips, I will come to you and strengthen you." Lily did not pay very much heed to his words, she had no clear idea what the difficulties and dangers would be, and she did not understand how great a help the Prince was offering her. However, she promised to do as he recommended, and then she started on her journey.

For some time she got on very well. The sun was shining, and the birds were singing, and the air was soft and warm; walking through the garden seemed pleasant work enough. But, as it grew dark, Lily felt that she was getting tired. The sound of the wind moaning and sighing in the trees made her feel sad, and she could hear in the distance the roaring of the wild beasts. Then her knees began to give, and her ankles to tremble under her, and she felt as though she must fall, when all of a sudden she saw, close at hand, one of the vines of which the Prince had spoken. "How good of him to put it here," thought she, as she picked some of the fruit and tasted it. At once the Prince was by her side, and strength seemed to come from him to her. Her ankles were steadied, her knees straightened, and full of peace and courage she passed unhurt through the midst of the wild beasts. The wind now seemed changed; it no longer sounded melancholy to her, and the night was not half so dark as she had thought, for she could see how brightly the stars were shining overhead. For some distance she journeyed on very bravely, and the next time she came to one of the vines she did not pick any of the fruit, for she fancied that she did not need it, so she passed by without even remembering the Prince.

No sooner had she done so than she found herself *treading on soft, boggy ground*; at each step she

seemed to sink in deeper than before, and she grew so weary that she could hardly draw her feet out at all. But this time no Prince was at her side to help in her difficulties, and sad, and weak, and lonely, she felt inclined to cry with despair.

Then she heard a voice speaking, and the voice said to her, "Did you not forget to pick the fruit in remembrance of the Prince?" "Yes," she exclaimed, only now recollecting that she had done so. "That is why you are so weak," replied the voice. Then Lily hurried on to the next vine as fast as she could, though her companions laughed at her for thinking it would make any difference. And as she picked its fruit, the Prince again came to her; and though he looked a little grieved because she had neglected to do so last time, he said nothing, and once more strength flowed from him to her, and she felt refreshed and helped. I think she never again forgot to remember the Prince who had planted those vines, and to pick their fruit till she too reached safely the blue mountains which lay on the further side of the clear river.

Now you all understand my story, don't you? Who was meant by the Prince? (The Lord Jesus Christ.) And what was meant by the vines which he had planted? (The Holy Communion.)

Yes, we have difficulties, and dangers, and temptations all round us, and we are apt to fall, just as Lily, the little cripple, was; and so our Lord has told us of a way by which we can get strength. Just as she was to pick the fruit, and the Prince would come to her and help her; so we are to go to the Holy Communion, and if we go earnestly, Jesus will come to us there, and give Himself to us. Strength will flow from Him to us, and make us able to fight, and stand, and go forward on the Christian journey. As you have repeated so often, when children, we get "the

strengthening and refreshing of our souls" in the Holy Communion, we are nearer to Jesus there than at any other time.

Study your Lord's own words when you get home, and you will see that what I have told you is true. (See John vi. 48-58.)

How wrong, how unwise it is then for His servants to neglect the Holy Communion, or to go seldom and irregularly. How they grieve and disobey Him, and what strength and refreshment they lose as they turn away from His altar. I should like each one here who really wants to serve God, to settle that she will go to the Holy Communion once a month *at least*. To go rarely when we can go often is just to weaken ourselves for nothing. Now, have I not shown you three good reasons why the Holy Communion is very important? (1) Because it is our Lord's dying wish; (2) because it is His plain command; (3) because it is a very great help.

But, as I said before, some of you cannot go at present to the Holy Communion, because you have not been confirmed. I shall therefore spend the few moments that remain in talking specially to you about Confirmation, because I want you to know a little what it is, that you may begin to get ready for it. What I shall say will remind the rest of you of that solemn day on which you were confirmed, and will, I hope, lead you to ask yourselves how far you have lived to the promise you made then.

Probably all here have seen a Confirmation; you have seen the Bishop arrive at the Church, and then you have gone in to find the girls, many of them, dressed in white, seated on the one side, and the young men on the other. And you have heard them answer a question which the Bishop asks, and have watched *them go up to the Bishop and kneel down in front of*

him, while he puts his hands on their heads and prays God to bless them.

But what does it all mean? what are those young men and women doing?

The Bishop asked them a question; what was it? Put into other words it was just this, "Do you mean to serve God till death comes?"

And then in that still quiet Church the answer rises from all those young lips, "*I do.*" Two little words, but how much they mean! And, as they are spoken, the parents and friends are listening, the whole congregation are listening, the Bishop is listening, and not they alone, the Church is filled by a crowd of unseen hearers. Don't you think that the holy Angels can hear, and the dead in Christ can hear? And more than that, God Himself is there, and He hears.

Truly, to make that promise is a solemn thing. To make it without meaning it, is to come before God with a lie. To make it with an honest, humble wish to keep it, is to gladden the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

God has never been satisfied that His servants should obey Him secretly, and hide from others that they were His. He has always asked of them that they should bravely and openly come forward, and acknowledge before everybody that they wanted to serve Him.

For instance, many hundred years ago the Israelites had sinned very much against God. They had made a calf of gold, an idol, and had worshipped it. Moses, when he heard of this, was indignant. He stood by the gate of the camp, and in God's name called on all those who were ashamed of their sin, and who still wanted to serve the Lord, to come forward and show it before everyone. (Exod. xxxii. 26.)

"Who is on the Lord's side?" he asked, and then

added, "Let him come unto me." There was Moses by the gate. A great crowd of Israelites stood in front of him, and those who wished to be God's servants were to cross over and stand where Moses stood. How hard it must have been for them to leave their friends and come over to him ; how difficult to do so when everyone could see and make remarks. But God would have His servants acknowledge publicly that they served Him. And they did it. One by one they left their friends, left the crowd, and came out before all to "consecrate themselves to the Lord" (Exod. xxxii. 29).

My friends, God still asks, "Who is on the Lord's side?" "Who will be My servant till death comes?" And the Church of England gives you an opportunity of coming out openly, like those Israelites, and of making a profession at your Confirmation. Coming to be confirmed is an answer to God's question, it is saying "I want to be on the Lord's side."

Of course Confirmation means more than what I have told you. When you go to the clergyman to be prepared, he will show you from the Bible how God gives the Holy Spirit to those who come earnestly to be confirmed.

He will make you see how scriptural it is that the Bishop should lay his hands on you, and bless you : he will point out to you how the Apostles themselves held Confirmations in Samaria and Ephesus.

Of all this I cannot speak to you this afternoon. I can only tell you how your Confirmation day is a public, open choosing of Christ as your Master ; a public promise to serve Him always.

And I can remind you too that it is the gate to the still greater help and blessing of which I spoke just now : the Holy Communion.

*Oh, look forward to being confirmed, and to becom-*

ing a Communicant. Pray about it; say often "Father, help me to get ready, make me fit to go to the Holy Communion." Give yourself now to Jesus secretly in your hearts, determine now to serve Him faithfully; so that when, on your Confirmation day, you say before all, those little words "I do," the Lord may hear you gladly.

Thus, in a few months, each one here will be able, if she will, to keep Christ's dying wish, to obey His plain command, and to get in the Holy Communion the help and strength He offers us.

May He teach us all how great the blessing is which there He gives us.



## XII.

### HOLY COMMUNION (2).

I AM again to-day going to speak to you about the Holy Communion ; several of you were unable to be here last week, so you must let me repeat a little of what I said then.

I tried to point out (1) that it was our Lord's last dying wish that we should go to the Holy Communion ; that it was on the Thursday night before He died, only a few hours before He was nailed to the Cross, that He said : " Do this in remembrance of Me."

And now I want to ask what you would think of a person who neglected and disobeyed an earthly friend's dying wish ?

Supposing two friends had gone out together to America, the one a man, the other almost a lad ; and that the older one had taken the younger into his house, and had found him work, and put him in the way of gaining a good livelihood, and been very kind to him. And then had fallen dangerously ill, and in his last moments had said to his companion : " When you get back to England, will you go and see my mother and tell her about me ?" *What* should you have thought of that lad, if, soon after, he had returned home, but had forgotten all about his friend's last words ; and when reminded, had refused to go and see the poor sorrowing mother ?

You would say that he was terribly ungrateful for *all that* had been done for him, that he had no heart, *no affection in him.*

My friends, our Lord left Heaven for you, He was poor and weary for you, He bore mocking laughter, loneliness, ill usage, awful pain for you; He died for you, and dying, asked you to go to the Holy Communion as His last wish. What will be thought of you in Heaven if you neglect to do so? Can you refuse to carry out His last words? I know you cannot.

(2) I showed you last week that it is your Master's plain command that you should go to the Holy Communion, that His words are "*do this*" in remembrance of Me.

And now, again, I want to ask you whether an earthly servant dares to openly and continually disobey one of his master's orders? If he did so, could he remain in that master's service? You know well enough that he would be dismissed.

Then how dare any of you, who call yourselves Christ's servants, refuse to obey His plain command about the Holy Communion? If you have been disobeying it, I think the reason must be that you have not thought of it in this way, and I feel sure you will now resolve to make a change, and to become regular Communicants.

(3) I tried last Sunday to prove to you what a great help the Holy Communion is to Christ's struggling servants, how that in it Jesus comes to them, and gives them strength.

Once more let me ask you, is it not madness to refuse so great a blessing? Is it not madness to refuse help when we want it so much; to neglect getting the strength He offers, when we are so weak?

A sick girl has had a bad fever, which has kept her in bed for a long time and made her very weak. But she is getting better, and at last the doctor says she may, on the next fine day, walk once down the street

and back again. Gladly she tries to do so, though her steps are very feeble and tottering.

Her brother comes and offers to support her. What should you say if she refused his help? You would think her very foolish indeed. And what would be the consequence in her weak state? Of course she would fall, and she might hurt herself very much, and become quite ill again.

Then is it not far more foolish for our Lord's weak, tempted servants to refuse to go to His altar, when He offers to come to them, and give them strength.

But perhaps some of you are feeling: "I see I ought to go, and that I should get a great blessing there, but I don't like to, I'm afraid I am not good enough."

Well, in one sense the greatest saint in England is not good enough to go so near the spotless, holy Saviour.

And yet He calls all those to come who *do honestly want to serve Him*, He is ready to accept very tenderly each one who really wishes to be His.

An old man to whom I once talked about the Holy Communion, said he could not make up his mind to go, "he was not good enough, and it was an uncommon dangerous thing." And I believe many have this feeling in their hearts, even if they don't put it into words as he did. Perhaps some of you here think the Holy Communion a very dangerous thing. Then look at it for a moment in this way.

Do you suppose that the Lord, who loves you so much, would call you to come if it were dangerous for you to go?

Does a mother ask her child to do what is dangerous? Does she, for instance, stand below a steep *slippery* rock, and tell her little one, who is on the *top*, to hurry down to her. No indeed, she loves it

too much to wish it to do what is dangerous. And be very sure that He, who loves you yet more tenderly, would not invite you to take of that Bread and drink of that Cup, if it were dangerous for you to obey Him.

Of course to go lightly to the Holy Communion without wishing to serve our Lord would indeed be an awful thing to do. To go merely because I or your mistress "asked you to," or "because the others go," without any intention of trying to obey the Master whom there you meet, would be terrible. To kneel there and let Jesus come very near you, without wishing to obey Him, without longing for His strength or blessing, would indeed be "dangerous."

But I trust that none here will communicate like that. Go, determined to be Christ's servants; go, to get strength and help from Him, and He will welcome you.

And let me just remind you that those who feel they could not communicate in this manner, and therefore would not be fit to go at all, are not ready to die. Unless you are fit to meet Jesus at the Holy Communion, *can* you be fit to die and meet Him on His throne?

For the rest of my Lesson I am going to take for granted that each one here who is trying to lead a Christian life, will from to-day become a communicant. And I shall spend the time that remains in talking to you about how to prepare for the Holy Communion, and how to receive the Holy Communion.

*How to prepare.* People you know always prepare for any great event that is going to happen.

Sometimes the queen, when in Scotland, invites those who live in the cottages all round, to a tea at the palace. Now would they not get ready beforehand,

and "tidy themselves up," and prepare for it? Perhaps one of the young girls who was going, happened to have a white dress in her chest of drawers. What would she do? I think she would take it out and examine it, to see if there were any spots, or stains, or tears, and then she would wash it and get it up nicely, and be very careful that no more stains should come upon it, before the great day arrived.

If then you are going to the Holy Communion, that there the King of kings may come to you, and give Himself to you, and dwell in you; should you not prepare? See 1 John iii. 3, surely "he that hath this hope in him (of meeting Jesus) purifieth himself even as Christ is pure," and 1 Sam. vii. 3 "Prepare your hearts then unto the Lord, and serve Him only."

Now I think there are three things we should do, in preparing for Holy Communion.

(1) *We should examine ourselves* and look into our hearts and lives, and see what has been wrong there since our last Communion. Turn to 1 Cor. xi. 28, "Let a man *examine* himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." You remember we said the girl who was preparing to go to the Queen's Palace would examine her dress to see what needed putting to rights, and we need to examine our conduct, so as to put that to rights.

Probably when you were confirmed the clergyman gave you a little book about the Holy Communion; and in it, no doubt, there are some questions to help you examine yourselves, self-examination questions, as they are generally called.<sup>1</sup> Read them over very

<sup>1</sup> Any girl who has no book on the Holy Communion, can get a very nice one, by enclosing five stamps with her name and address to The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Knightsbridge, London, and writing, Please send me "Thoughts and Prayers for Young Communicants."

slowly and thoughtfully, pausing between each one to look into yourself, and find out what you have done, and said, and thought, that was wrong.

You know in time of war soldiers called scouts are sent out to examine the country. They have to examine the woods and thickets, because sometimes the enemy is hidden there, and they have to examine the buildings, in case some foes should lie concealed in them, and they go up on to a hill and examine the country all round to try and find out where the enemy is most likely to be, so that they may be better prepared to fight him.

But some of these soldiers or scouts do their work much less thoroughly than others. They examine everything so hastily and carelessly, that half the time the enemy may be concealed in a thicket quite close to them, and yet they would not find him out.

Do not be like them! do not examine yourself hurriedly! With the help of those questions examine yourself so carefully, that you may find out all the enemies, all the sins and faults against which you have got to fight.

And there is something else which must always go with self-examination. What is that? Prayer, when we have found out some of our sins, we *should* (2) *bring those sins to Jesus in prayer*. See Jer. xxix. 12 "Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you." Confess to Him all you have done that is wrong. Remind Him that He was wounded for those faults, and bruised for those sins. Ask Him to make you very sorry for them, and to cleanse you from their stains. And ask Him to help you fight for the future more earnestly against those hidden enemies which you have discovered. In your little books on the Holy Communion you will find prayers which speak to Him

something in this way. Use them, and pray also about your sins, in any words which may come into your hearts.

But self-examination and prayer must not be our only preparation for Holy Communion.

The girl who was preparing to go to the Queen's feast would not only examine her dress to find the spots and stains and then wash out those spots.

As we said, she would also be very careful to keep the dress pure and white, and not to let it get soiled again; and so, before going to Christ's altar we should not only find out our sins and bring them to Jesus to be washed away,

(3) *We should also try very hard to keep from every spot or stain of sin.* See Job xi. 13, 14, 15 "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards Him, if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away . . . for then shall thou lift up thy face without spot."

Watch then against the faults you fall into most often; "put them away" from you, be very careful not to do or say anything that will displease that holy Lord whom you are going to meet.

Lastly, I want to say a few words to you about

*How to receive the Holy Communion.* There is generally a good deal of spare time whilst others are communicating, and I have sometimes noticed that people seem as if they did not know what to do with that time. They sit upright in their pews, just waiting, and doing nothing else, or else they look about them and notice who is there and what they have got on. What a pity! What a sad waste of moments which are very valuable! Surely when Jesus is so near to us we should have much to say to Him, so much that the difficulty should be to get it all in. Let us think of some of the things we ought to say to Him.

(1) *Whom are we to remember?* See Luke xxii.

19. We are to take that sacred Bread and Wine in remembrance of the dear Lord Himself. Then try and remember all He did for you, and speak to Him about it. Think of Him leaving Heaven for you. Think of Him suffering alone under the dark trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, think of Him bearing the laughter and the insults of the people during His trial, think of Him hanging on the Cross between two thieves, think of Him dying in awful pain. Remember Him bearing it all for you, and for other sinners, and thank Him for His love and pity.

(2) At the Holy Communion you are not only to remember our Lord and His death yourself, you are "to show it" to God, to remind Him of it, and to plead with Him to accept you, because of it. See 1 Cor. xi. 26 which tells us to do this, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." The breaking of the bread shows forth the breaking and bruising of His sacred Body on the Cross. The pouring out of the wine shows forth the shedding of His Blood for us. Oh, speak to God about it. Say words like these, "Father, we would show Thee, we would bring before Thee, the death which Thy Son died for us. Accept us because of Him."

"Look, Father, look on His anointed face,  
And only look on us as found in Him;  
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,  
Our prayers so languid, and our faith so dim.  
For lo! between our sins and their reward  
We set the Passion of Thy Son, our Lord."

(3) Speak much to Jesus as He comes to you in the Holy Communion about your sins, and falls and struggles of last month. Ask His help for the next one, pray that you may use earnestly the strength He is now giving you, and that you may lead the life of a faithful Communicant. And as you go up to the



altar rails, speak to Him in the beautiful words of hymn 255, out of the collection we use in church. If you do not know them already, I should advise you to learn them by heart, that you may say them to your Lord then. They seem wonderfully suitable. You know that you are weak and sinful, that you often do wrong, and you hardly feel fit to go and meet Jesus at His altar. And yet He calls you, and His blood was shed for you, that is all you can say for yourself, that is your only plea :

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
Oh Lamb of God, I come."

(4) When you have gone back to your seat, what should you do then? You have received a great gift of strength. Should you not thank your Lord for it. He has come to dwell in you, ask Him to stay with you, and to make you very pure and holy.

(5) Pray for the other Communicants. We do not go to the Holy Communion alone, we go with other Christians, and they need help as much as we do. Ask then that they too may be much blessed, and that all who have met in that Church, at Christ's Table, may go out to live for Him, to speak for Him, to work for Him, to glorify Him.

I must now end what I have to say to you about the Holy Communion. I will only add that if you go regularly, and prepare for it earnestly, and receive it prayerfully and faithfully, you will, I know, find it a very great blessing. I pray God that He may help us all to go in this manner.

### XIII.

#### WORK FOR JESUS.

As we look around us in God's world, and see the sky, the trees, the flowers, the green grass, the waving corn, we know that everything is very beautiful, and that everything is doing the work it is meant to do. The rain freshens and moistens the earth, the sun warms it and makes the crops grow, the sweet pure air keeps us healthy and well. God's world is indeed "very good."

Now all this was made for man, how is it with him? Does he also do what God meant him to do? He only can know the Heavenly Father, he only can love Him, does he then obey Him as the wind, and the sun, and the rain, and the flowers obey Him?

Alas! not so.

Thousands of men and women know of God, yet disobey Him daily, and live as if they had never heard of Him. They are doing harm to all around them, they are ruining their own souls, they are unfitting themselves for Heaven, they are fitting themselves — for Hell.

Thousands, again, did turn to God years ago, perhaps at their Confirmation, perhaps in some time of trouble or sickness, but now they are very lonely in serving Him. "I have no one to help me," they say, "no one cares for my soul," and they are sorely tempted to slip back into the old ways of carelessness and sin, and to forget Him who made them.

Yes, on all sides, there are men, women, and children who are forgetting their God, who are hurrying

along the broad road which leads to condemnation. What can be done to stop them? God wants them to be drawn back to Him, Jesus Christ died to save them, how shall they be saved?

My friends, *through you* some of them can be saved. You can help bring them to Jesus, that He may heal them. If you yourselves are His servants, He has trusted that work to you. How much there is to be done! For the least of Christ's servants, for the youngest of Christ's servants, for all, there is work.

Our Lord sees to-day the numbers who are living careless, sinful lives, who are none the better for the death He died for them, and He longs to send messages to each one with the news of His love. I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Is. vi. 8.) Are the clergy only to answer? They already have work in plenty to do, much more than they have time for. Surely, then, each one of Christ's servants as they hear that question "Whom shall I send, who will go for us?" must answer, longs to answer: "Here am I, send me" (Is. vi. 8).

In another part of the Bible He tells you just what He sends you to do; see Acts xxvi. 17, 18, "I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." Oh, I ask again, as you hear your Lord calling for messengers, calling for workers who are to win the sinful and the careless back to Him, what shall be your answer? Shall it be, "I don't care what happens to others, I don't care how they live or how they die." Or will you say humbly, knowing that you yourself are weak and sinful, yet bravely, because it is Jesus *who is calling you*, "Here am I, send me."

*You all read last year in the newspapers of that*

terrible disease the cholera, which broke out in France and killed hundreds and hundreds of people in a few weeks. Now supposing you had been in France with friends living in those French towns, and had known that the disease was coming, what should you have done? I think you would have written to your friends to warn them of their danger, you would have gone and seen them, in order to urge them to leave the neighbourhood in time. No trouble would you have spared to make things plain to them, am I not right? Then surely if you have learned yourself to see the awful danger of sin, will you not warn others that they too may "flee from the wrath to come."

Or again, supposing you had discovered a gold mine which was inexhaustible, and the more you dug in it the more you found, what should you do? Should you keep the secret to yourself? I think not, I think you would go and tell your friends and relations that they also might become rich. And so, if you have found the riches of Christ's love, if you have found how glad, how peaceful, how happy it makes you to be His servant, you cannot keep the secret to yourself, you must go and tell it to others that they too may rejoice.

I am sure that in each heart here, in each one at least which has been given to Jesus, those words are rising up to Heaven with a great longing: "Lord, here am I, send me."

How then can you do the work which your Lord has given you? How can you win back souls to Him?

Let me speak to-day of three ways in which you can thus work for Him.

1. *By speaking for Him.* I know how hard this is to many of you, I know how you shrink from speaking about religious subjects to those who, perhaps,

show no interest in them. Others have felt just the same (see Jer. i. 6-10).

"Then said I, 'Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.' But the Lord said unto me, 'Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid . . . for I am with thee to deliver thee . . .' Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, 'Behold I have put my words in thy mouth.'"

Does not that sixth verse very much describe your feelings? You think "I *cannot* speak," I am so young, so bashful, so nervous, I should not know what to say. Then read again God's answers, "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak," "Be not afraid," "I am with thee," "I have put my words in thy mouth."

Only try and speak for Jesus. Pray for strength, pray for words, pray for God's blessing on them. Say to Him, "Lord help me to speak for thee, Lord teach me what to say, Lord make the words of some use." He will hear you.

I dare say you are thinking "but *when* shall I speak?" I cannot tell. God will give you the power, and God will also give you the opportunity. Perhaps after Church on Sunday you could speak to a friend of something which interested you specially in the sermon. Perhaps in walking home to-day you could speak to another member of this class, and talk over with each other how best you can work for Christ. Again, a word of sympathy to one who, like yourself, feels the difficulties of the daily fight with sin, may do much to help and cheer a fellow-Christian on his road. Let me tell you an instance of this.

A girl in service, who belonged to one of my former *classes*, was paying not long ago a visit, with the young

ladies on whom she waited. She was one who wanted to work for her Master, and to speak for Him whenever she could, so she tried to talk of religious subjects to the under housemaid of the house in which she was staying. She found that Eliza, for that was the housemaid's name, had once been much more thoughtful than she now was. "Before I came here I used to go to the Holy Communion once a month, and I always read the Bible every day, but no one ever speaks to me about these things," said she, "and it's so hard all by one-self. I am afraid I have grown careless and have gone back in serving God." The two girls had a long talk, which ended in Eliza saying, "I do want to make a fresh start, and be more earnest again." Don't you think her companion must have felt glad that she had tried to speak for Jesus?

And in speaking for your Lord, don't forget the men of your acquaintance, your own friends or fellow-servants. Young men are shy with each other on Heavenly things, they are far less reserved with a woman, and you may be a real help to them if you will sometimes gently and kindly speak to them of God and the world to come. Very likely some of you are thinking "No that is too hard, anything but that, they would only joke and tease if I did so." Believe me, all that joking is often just to hide the "bashfulness" which makes them shrink from grave talk. Speak to them when you are alone, and the joking tone will soon pass off. I have known girls who would ask a fellow man-servant if he was ready to die, they asked the question kindly and sympathetically and it was met not with laughing but with serious answers, "Let us have another talk about these things some other day," one young man said; as the girl was called away in the midst of their conversation.

Now many of Christ's servants allow themselves to shrink from speaking for Him. A friend, perhaps, seems inclined to talk of religion, the opening is given, the opportunity there; but in a sudden fit of shyness they turn away and speak of something else. The words for Christ are left unsaid, the opportunity is lost, the work is not done. How often we have all acted thus, and how we have sorrowed afterwards. Oh, a dumb, tongue-tied Christian is a miserable creature, an unprofitable servant to the great Master!

"Have you not a word for Jesus? Will the world His praise proclaim?

Who shall speak if you are silent? you who know and love His Name.

\* \* \* \* \*

Will you cast away the gladness thus, your Master's joy to share;  
 All because a word for Jesus seems too much for you to dare?  
*What shall be our word for Jesus? Master, give it day by day;  
 Ever as the need arises, teach thy children what to say.*"

I must now pass on to the second way in which you can work for Christ. How can you help win over to Him some of the thousands living near you whom you do not know, and therefore cannot speak to of the Father in Heaven?

2. *By your money.* Never forget that your money is lent you by God and is to be used for Him. It can bring to men and women the news of a Heavenly Father's love, and a Saviour's death. Then do not waste it. Many of you, I know, have only a little left after buying what is necessary for yourself. But could you not increase that little by giving up some ornament, some ribbon, some flower, and then spend the money saved in bringing the knowledge of Christ to dying sinners.

In some parts of England there are parishes where one clergyman has perhaps 8000 people under his care. Formerly the population there was about half

what it is now. Then villages became towns, large factories were built, strangers flocked in, all changed, except the one rector, who works no doubt very hard, but can he possibly know and help each one of his 8000 parishioners?

Of course not. Amongst his flock there are people dying unvisited by any clergyman, there are souls sunk deep in sin, and no one to try and rouse them out of it, there are girls growing up rough, and hard, and ignorant, with no one to invite them to a Bible Class and tell them about their Father in Heaven.

Well, a society has been formed to send out more clergy into these thickly peopled places, clergy who will spend their days in trying to win souls to Christ. But those who go are, for the most part, men with no money of their own, and of course they have to be paid. To help in this, ladies in different parts of the country are getting up sales of work, and the money thus made goes towards paying these extra clergy. At these sales every sort of thing is sold: socks, stockings, pincushions, aprons, frocks, etc. All is of use. Now could not each one of you make some little article or other, which could then be sent to one of the ladies interested in these sales.

By doing so you would be helping to provide a messenger who would bring to those, who need it most, the news of God's love<sup>1</sup>.

But I earnestly hope that no one will give merely because I have suggested it, or because "someone else has done so," or because they "don't know how to refuse." See 2 Cor. ix. 7, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Mrs. Claughton, Danbury Palace, St. Alban's (President of the St. Alban's branch of the Ladies Home Mission Association), would, no doubt, gladly receive any contributions for her sales of work.



grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Yes, God loves a cheerful giver, one who gives gladly because she longs that others should know the peace, and joy, and happiness of belonging to Christ; who gives because she wants to work for the Master who has done so much for her.

On the other hand some of you may wish to give, but yet may have other calls upon your money, home calls perhaps, which make it impossible. Then see 2 Cor. viii. 12, "If there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." With you God accepts lovingly your wish to give, He knows that you cannot carry it out.

But there is a third way in which you can work for Christ, and in this all can take a part. I mean (3) *by your prayers*. See James v. 16, "Pray one for another." Prayer must go with both the two ways of which I have spoken to you, or they will be useless. When you speak for Christ, can you make your weak, faltering words sink into the hearts of those who listen? No, but God can. Then pray for a blessing on them. When you give your money to bring Christ's message to others, can you make those who hear the message obey it? No, but God can. Then pray for a blessing on your money. Pray much for your friends, for your relations, for the sick, the sinful, the tempted, the dying. Pray too for this Bible Class. Can we expect to hear our Lord's voice, as we meet together week by week, unless we pray to hear it? Oh, ask Him to speak so plainly to yourself, to me, to each member of this class, that *all* may "hear His voice" and follow Him. I think that if we *prayed more* for each other, there would be more love *for our Lord*, more burning earnestness amongst us.

I know of a lady who visits the poor in a district of a big country town, the district is made up of two streets, where she frequently goes, and she is friends, I think, with every person in those streets. When they are in trouble she sympathises with them, when they are happy she rejoices with them, when they are sick she reads and prays with them. But that is not all she does for her friends in the district. Every morning she gets up at six o'clock, that she may spend two hours in praying one by one for each person in those streets. Does not her example make us ashamed of ourselves? Does it not make us feel how little we have hitherto prayed for others?

Another very holy woman, named Mrs. Monsell, was later in life an invalid and never left her room. "She could not do much work for Christ" some would say, but she did, for most of her time was spent in praying for others. She would even pray for those of whom she read in her newspaper, the little children lately born into the world with life's fight before them, the young couples who had just entered on the happiness and the duties of married life, the sorrowing relations mourning a dear one whom God had called into the world unseen. For all these Mrs. Monsell would pray, one by one.

My friends, we are told that Christ lives to pray for others; shall not we, His servants, try and get more like Him in this? To pray for others is to bring down God's blessing on them. Can anything be more glorious?

I have spoken to you of three ways in which you can work for Christ. Let me now remind you that many, alas, are working, not for Him, but for the Devil.

Even girls sometimes do this. They harm others, they lead them away from God, instead of to Him.

Can it not truly be said that they are working for the Devil? Do you ask "*how* can they work for Satan?" I answer, there are plenty of ways. Some friend who once lived a thoughtless sinful life gets more serious, becomes perhaps a Communicant. Instead of helping the poor wanderer back into the Heavenly path, they say with a sneer, "*You* turning religious, who would have thought it!" A young man who had been given to drink, takes the pledge. For a joke they do all they can to make him break it. A companion meets them on a Sunday evening. "Come and have a walk with me," they say. "I have not yet been to Church" is the answer. "Oh, never mind," they reply, "come along with me instead."

These are only a few instances out of many hundreds of ways in which young girls like you can do the Devil's work. And "be very sure that those who do the Devil's work will get the Devil's wages." He pays regularly, he pays surely, and his wages are death. May God forgive us if we have ever led others into evil, and may He in His mercy undo the harm we have done. It is an awful thing to kill an enemy's body. It is far worse to kill a friend's soul.

I do trust, however, that each one here wishes to work, not for Satan, but for the Master in Heaven. You do not want souls to be ruined, you want them to be saved. Is it not so? Then work earnestly for the Lord Jesus by speaking, giving, praying. Of course you must first have taken Him as your Master, your Saviour. Till you have done that your words spoken about religion will do harm not good. Your money will bring no blessing, your prayers find no answer. But if you have given yourselves to Him, and have found the peace and rest of His forgiveness, I feel sure your first thought will be "*how* can I bring *others* to *Him* that He may bless and heal them too?"

He is saying to you this afternoon, "Go work in my vineyard" (Matt. xxi. 28); each day has its own bit of work marked out. Has it not been so already? Yesterday, Friday, Thursday, I believe there was work marked out for you, I feel sure there was someone to whom you might have spoken about God, someone for whom you might have saved your money, even if it was only a farthing, some one for whom you might have prayed. Yes, the work was marked out. Did you do it? How often have we "left undone those things which we ought to have done."

Oh, let us not waste our opportunities, for souls are unsaved, sinners are dying all around us, and we don't know how much longer we may have in which to help them. We only know that before long we too may be called away, and that "*the night cometh in which no man can work*" (John ix. 4).

## XIV.

### SHINING FOR JESUS.

WHEN you go out on a fine summer's day, all around is bright and warm, the light shines and sparkles through the trees, the grass becomes a golden green, the air is soft and hot. What is it that gives all this warmth and light? You answer at once: The sun.

You go out again some hours later, everything has changed; there are still gleams of light and dark shadows, but the light is much paler and more silvery. What gives it now? The moon.

But, though the sun and the moon both shine and give light, there is a great difference in their way of doing so. The sun is something like one great sea of flame; it is fiercely hot and bright, it shines with its own light. The moon, on the other hand, is in itself cold and dark like our earth; it, too, is made of mountains and valleys, and has no light of its own, how then does it shine? Only by giving back the rays of the sun, which fall upon it and then bound off in all directions. So, as I said before, the sun shines with its own light, and the moon shines only with a borrowed light. You will understand in a few moments why I have talked of this.

I must now go on to speak to you of a shining light which we see, not with our eyes, but with our souls. I mean the light of a holy life.

About 1900 years ago the world was very different from what it is now. The people then were mostly heathen; they prayed to a stone, or to an animal, or to a figure of wood, and thought that these idols could

help and hear them. They believed their gods to be cruel and unkind, and fancied they could please them by killing the little children and offering them as a sacrifice. One nation, however, knew of the true God. Which was that? (The Jews.)

But many of them had turned away from serving Him. They were forgetting how important it was that they should love Him, and be kind, and truthful, and unselfish. They thought more of all sorts of little things; they were very particular to have the hem at the bottom of their clothes of a certain width; they were most anxious to wash their hands and feet the right number of times, before and after their meals; they said long prayers in the streets, not because they wanted to speak to God, but in order to be seen by others.

Should you say there was at that time much light for people's souls, or do you think the world was very dark? Surely the darkness was great.

Then One came down from Heaven who taught men what it was to be holy. He taught it them by His life and by His words. And what did He, the Lord Jesus Christ, say that He was? "I am the Light of the world" (John viii. 12). It could then be said, "The darkness is past and the true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8). Yes, His light shone far and wide, and hundreds came to gaze on it. Those who were with Him day by day saw His patience, strength, love, self-forgetfulness. The light shone straight on them, and into their hearts, and drove out the darkness. They knew now what it was to serve God. And, as the light shone, they saw more and more the beauty of holiness, for they saw "the fair beauty of the Lord."

But the Lord Jesus is not on earth now as He was then. He has gone back to Heaven. We cannot see

Him and hear His voice as they did. Is there no light then in the world to-day? *Who shines for Him?*

The Bible tells us (see Phil. ii. 15), "Ye," His servants, "shine as lights in the world." You know when a king has business to do in a distant country he does not always go himself; he sends someone else to do it for him, an ambassador who represents him. So the Lord Jesus has sent you and me and all His servants, to represent Him in the world now, and to shine for Him. Is it not a great honour that He should have chosen us to do this; is it not a grand thing to be allowed to shine for Jesus?

I wonder if you have ever known a Christian whose light shone very brightly. I am thinking of one now whom I know very well. I cannot tell you how gentle, and kind, and cheerful she is. The remembrance of God's presence is always with her. No sharp, hard word ever passes her lips. No thought of herself ever seems to come into her mind. If you go and see her, she is ready at any moment to put aside the things that trouble or interest her; she only wants to hear what you have to tell her, to help, and to sympathise. Now what is she doing as she leads this beautiful holy life? Surely she is shining for her Lord, and all who know her can see her light.

But some think "only a few saints can shine like that, it's all very well for them, but it's not meant for me."

Then let me remind you of *two plain commands* on the subject. One of them you know very well, you have heard it often in Church, can you tell me the verse I mean? "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" (Matt. v. 16). For the other verse *turn to Isaiah lx. 1, 2*—"Arise, shine . . . and His *glory shall be seen upon thee.*" These words you see

are spoken to every one of Christ's servants, all are to shine.

Of course it is often very hard to do so.

Not long ago I heard of a very earnest, religious girl, who had got into what seemed a most worldly dressmaking establishment. Her companions appeared to care only for dress and amusement ; if serious things were mentioned it was always with a laugh. Emma, for that was the girl's name, determined to leave. She said it was so hard to serve her Master faithfully there, that she must give warning.

I thought it a pity that she did so. In that house of business there was surely much darkness, they needed to see the light. If she had stayed, and by God's help had led a beautiful holy life there, they would have been the better for it. See what would again have happened (Is. ix. 2), "The people that walked in darkness would have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them would the light have shined."

Christ's servants, then, are to shine for Him, now let us ask *when are they to shine?* The answer is "always." "Now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light" (Eph. v. 8).

Many hundreds of years ago there was a heathen Temple in which a light was always kept burning. Twenty young girls were appointed, whose duty it was to see to this light, and they were forbidden ever to let it out. Had you gone into that Temple at ten o'clock in the morning, you would have found it shining; had you gone at five in the afternoon, it would have been just as bright; had you gone in the middle of the night, it would have lit up the darkness. It steady bright light shone always. So you are to keep burning, not the light of a lamp, but the light which *shines out of a beautiful, bright, holy life; you are to*



shine always, and everywhere. Let us take a few instances.

When you are at your work, do it well; do it thoroughly, do it quickly, let everyone see that Christ's servants are the best servants; then as you scrub, or wash, or sew, your light will be shining. When you are with your girl friends, don't join in stories about other people that are a little bit spiteful. Try and be gentle and kind because your Master in Heaven wishes it, and your light will be shining. When you are with your brothers, be cheery and obliging, show them you are glad to mend their clothes and sew the buttons on their shirts, show them that you take a real, loving interest in what they do and what they care about; show them that religion makes you a pleasant, helpful sister, then they will see its beauty through the shining of your light. Again, with your men friends be brave and outspoken, don't be ashamed to let them see that you serve the Lord Jesus, and at the same time be so gentle, and modest, and womanly that no man would ever venture to say a word to you that he ought not to say. Then, too, your light will be shining.

I have tried to show you how you can let your light shine when you are at your work, when you are with your girl friends, your brothers, your men friends. Time will not let me speak to you about how it should shine in your amusements, in joy and in trouble, in sickness and in health; try and think it out for yourselves, and don't forget that your Master wants you to shine always, like that light in the heathen Temple.

This is indeed no easy matter. How are you to do it?

Let us go back to what we said at the beginning about the moon and the sun. The moon, you remember, *has no light of its own*, it shines with a borrowed light, *which it gets from the sun*. So we, too, who are so

weak and sinful, have no light of our own; we have only a borrowed light, and we must get it from the Lord Jesus, who you know is called in the Bible "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2). See again (Is. lx. 20), "Thy sun shall no more go down . . . for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light."

His Church, His servants, give out to the world the light they get from Him—(Eph. v. 14), "Christ shall give thee light."

"The moon above, the Church below,  
A wondrous race they run;  
And all their radiance, all their glow,  
Each borrows from its sun."

Yes, *we are to get our light from Jesus*, and to do so we must be much with Jesus in prayer. As you kneel down to say your prayers, try and feel that His light is shining on to you, that you are obtaining from Him the blessing and the strength which are to be given out to the world again as you shine for Him.

Once when St. Peter and St. John were very brave, very earnest, when their light was shining very brightly, those who saw them marvelled (see Acts iv. 13), "What makes them like this?" the people said, "for they are nothing but ignorant men." Then the reason came out, you will find it in the last part of that 13th verse. St. Peter and St. John had been with Jesus, and the light gained from Him was being given out all around; no wonder that it was bright.

So, if you are much with Jesus in prayer, others will wonder what makes you so patient, and gentle, and brave, and earnest. And it will be because His light has shone on to you and is being reflected by you. "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light" (Is. lx. 20). "Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Is. ii. 5).

Now you know how sometimes a little thing will

shut off the light of the sun. The shutter is closed, one tiny nail perhaps fastens it, and through that nail all the light is kept out and the room is dark. Take that nail away, the shutter opens and the sunshine pours in. And with us one wilful sin, one wrong thing which we do not resolve to give up, will be like that little nail. It will prevent Christ's light from shining into our hearts. I have seen girls persist in some deceitful action which they felt to be wrong, or go on neglecting Holy Communion which they knew they ought to receive, and the wilful sin did keep out Christ's light and did make them unable to shine for Him till they gave it up. At last they did so with a great struggle, and then His light seemed to pour into their hearts.

Oh, if you have something which comes between you and Jesus, pull out the little nail, give up the sin, that you too may get His light, and be able to shine for Him.

And now I want you to notice a very important thing: *light draws people to it*, it attracts them. When you see a brightly lit house or shop, are you not attracted to it? And I dare say you have noticed that the little flowers, even in our windows, turn towards the sun, they are attracted by it.

Well, then, your light if you shine for Jesus will attract others; it will draw them to Him, from whom you get it. Worldly people will not let His light shine into their hearts, they will not see Jesus and His love, but they cannot help seeing His servants. And if His servants give out something of His beauty, that will show the world what their Master must be. Let me tell you a story of how one girl drew another to Jesus, just by shining for Him.

Two young ladies, whom I shall call Miss Jones and Miss Smith, were invited to spend three weeks in a

country house in Scotland. They had never met, and knew each other by name only. But when Miss Jones heard that Miss Smith was to be of the party, she said at once, "I know we shall never get on, she is one of your very religious people, and I shan't like her at all." Well, during the three weeks that they were together, Miss Jones did not talk much to her companion, and there were other people in the house with whom she made great friends, yet all the while she was noticing everything Miss Smith did. "I want to see," she said, "whether religious people are nicer or less nice than others." And what did she see? At luncheon time the visitors used to be asked whether they would like to ride, or drive, or walk, and Miss Smith seemed always to choose what she thought would suit other people, not what she preferred herself. The children belonging to the house used to come down to the drawing-room at certain hours of the day, and the person they liked best to play with was Miss Smith, because she was always good-humoured and kind to them, and did not mind being disturbed in what she was doing. When all the ladies and gentlemen were together, there was of course a great deal of talk, and sometimes the talk was not quite good-natured; absent people were laughed at and stories were told against them. In this Miss Smith did not join; quite gently and pleasantly she would try and turn the conversation to some other subject. Then, again, amongst the guests there was a young girl who was very shy and silent; most of the company left her to herself and hardly ever spoke to her, but Miss Smith would do all she could to put her at her ease, and make her more happy.

At last the three weeks came to an end, the party broke up, and Miss Jones and Miss Smith did not meet again for six months. They were then travelling

in France with friends, and arrived one night at the same hotel. It happened to be very full, so the two girls agreed to share the same room. That evening Miss Jones told her companion how closely she had watched her when in Scotland. "I did so," she said, "because I wanted to find out what religious people are like, and I saw pretty soon that your religion made you much nicer than anybody else." And then she went on to say, "Tell me how I can serve the Lord Jesus, for I want to become religious myself."

You see the one girl, by shining for her Lord, had drawn the other to Him.

My friends, people are watching you too, they are expecting you to shine for Jesus. Why? because thank God, you are Communicants. The world expects, and expects rightly, that those who come to kneel at their Lord's altar should go out to serve Him, and that they should show the beauty of His religion in their lives. When they fail to do so, how quickly it is remarked, people speak of their faults, adding indignantly, "and she a Communicant too! I can't see the good of being religious if it makes one no better than that."

Some of you have not been confirmed and are not Communicants. Nevertheless your friends will expect to see your light shine, just because you belong to a Bible Class.

Oh, what harm we can do by our rough words and selfish ways. What dishonour we can bring on the Master's Name by letting our light burn dimly. "The way of the wicked is as darkness" (Prov. iv. 19). How is it with you? Are you shining? We talked last week of work for Christ. Shining for Him is surely the best and grandest work of all. It wins most over to the Master's side. Without it other work is no good *whatever*.

And notice two little words which I have used very often. We are not to shine only because "it is right," only because "it is our duty." Those seem cold words. But we are asked to shine "*for Jesus*," for Him who loves us, who gave Himself for us, who has chosen us to win others to Him. What can be happier or more blessed?

At the end of this Lesson you will find a beautiful hymn on Shining. It was written by Miss Havergal, a very holy woman whose own light burned brightly when on earth. She has now passed away into Paradise. Her voice comes to you very solemnly from the other side of the grave. I know you will listen to it as she asks you, "*Are you shining for Jesus, dear one?*"

Here our light is dull compared to that of the blessed ones there; some sin, alas, seems always to come in and dim it. But it ought to shine daily more brightly. The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth *more and more* unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

And in Heaven we shall be like Jesus the Sun of righteousness. We shall see Him as He is.

"*Then shall the righteous shine forth as doth the sun in the kingdom of their Father*" (Matt. xiii. 43).

Are you *shining* for Jesus, dear ones?  
 You have given your hearts to Him;  
 But is the light strong within them,  
 Or is it but pale and dim?  
 Can *everybody* see it—  
 That Jesus is all to you?  
 That your love to Him is burning  
 With radiance warm and true?  
 Is the seal upon your forehead,  
 So that it *must* be known  
 That you are "all for Jesus"—  
 That your hearts are all His own?

## A GLAD SERVICE.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear ones?  
 You remember the first sweet ray,  
 When the sun arose upon you  
 And brought the gladsome day;  
 When you heard the gospel message,  
 And Jesus Himself drew near,  
 And helped you to trust Him simply,  
 And took away your fear;  
 When the darkness and the shadows  
 Fled like a weary night,  
 And you felt that you could praise Him,  
 And everything seemed bright.

Are you shining for Jesus, dear ones?  
 So that the holy light  
 May enter the hearts of others,  
 And make them glad and bright?  
 Have you spoken a word for Jesus,  
 And told to some around—  
 Who do not care about Him—  
 What a Saviour *you* have found?  
 Have you lifted the lamp for others,  
 That has guided your own glad feet?  
 Have you echoed the loving message,  
 That seemed to you so sweet?

Are you shining for Jesus, dear ones,  
 Shining for Him all day,  
 Letting the light burn always  
 In lessons and in play?  
 Always,—when those beside you  
 Are walking in the dark?  
 Always,—when no one is helping  
 Or heeding your tiny spark?  
 Not idly letting it flicker  
 In every passing breeze  
 Of pleasure or temptation,  
 Of trouble or of ease?

Are you shining for Jesus, dear ones,  
 Shining just everywhere,  
 Not only in easy places,  
 Not only just here or there?  
 Shining in happy gatherings,  
 Where all are loved and known?

Shining where all are strangers—  
 Shining when quite alone?  
 Shining at home and making  
 True sunshine all around?  
 Shining at school, and faithful—  
 Perhaps among faithless—found?

Are you shining for *Jesus*, dear ones,  
 Not for yourselves at all?  
 Not because dear ones, watching,  
 Would grieve if your lamp should fall?  
 Shining because you are walking  
 In the Sun's unclouded rays,  
 And you cannot help reflecting  
 The light on which you gaze?  
 Shining because it shineth  
 So warm and bright above,  
 That you *must* let out the gladness,  
 And you *must* show forth the love?

*Are* you shining for *Jesus*, dear ones?  
 Or is there a little sigh  
 That the lamp His love had lighted  
 Does not burn clear and high?  
 Is the heavenly crown that waits you  
 Still, still without a star,  
 Because your light was hidden,  
 And sent no rays afar?  
 Do you feel you have not loved Him  
 With a love right brave and loyal,  
 But have faintly fought and followed  
 His banner bright and royal?

Oh, come again to *Jesus*,  
 Come as you came at first,  
 And tell Him all that hinders,  
 And tell Him all the worst:  
 And take His sweet forgiveness  
 As you took it once before,  
 And hear His kind voice saying—  
 "Peace! 'Go, and sin no more!'"  
 Then ask for grace and courage—  
 His name to glorify,  
 That never more His precious light  
 Your dimness may deny.



## A GLAD SERVICE.

Then rise, and "watching daily,"  
Ask Him your lamps to trim  
With the fresh oil He giveth,  
That they may not burn dim.  
Yes, rise and shine for Jesus!  
Be brave and bright, and true,  
To the true and loving Saviour,  
Who gave Himself for you.  
Oh, shine for Jesus, dear ones!  
And henceforth be your way  
Bright with the light that shineth  
Unto the perfect day!

*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

## XV.

### COURAGE IN THE FIGHT.

WHEN the children of Israel left Egypt, they had a long journey before them. Think of them starting on that journey, there were 600,000 men on foot, besides the women and children, and there were also flocks, and herds, and much cattle (Exod. xii. 37, 38). What a crowd it must have been! What a procession! What a start! Behind them lay Egypt, its days of hard, weary work over the bricks, its cruel taskmasters, its still more cruel King Pharaoh. Before them was the land of Canaan, "the Promised Land," where they hoped to live in peace and plenty.

But, before they could enjoy the Promised Land, there were first many enemies to conquer. They would have to conquer not only the possessors of Canaan, but also those nations who lived all round it. Till this was done they could have no pleasure in the Promised Land. Why? Because their enemies would harass them, would come in and take their goods, would leave them no peace, would spoil everything. So "first they must fight and conquer, then rest, and enjoy."

Now the battles coming very often, the Israelites frequently grew downhearted, and shrunk from fighting. They had so many enemies, and the enemies were so strong, so powerful, that they felt afraid.

See then the words which were said to them, to give them courage. Read Deut. xx. 1-5, 8: "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies and

seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt . . . When ye are come nigh to battle the priests shall approach, and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them: . . . 'Ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies. Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble; neither be ye terrified because of them. For the Lord . . . is He that goeth with you to fight for you . . . to save you.'

And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say: 'what man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.'

All this seems to me like a parable for us.

We too have a Promised Land, even a Heavenly Land. To us also it is said: "Behold the Lord thy God hath set the Land before thee. Go up and possess it . . . fear not, neither be discouraged" (Deut. i. 21).

And we also have enemies to conquer first. What are they? Our faults, our sins; pride, temper, untruthfulness, selfishness, discontent, idleness, these enemies must be fought against, and driven back. Supposing we could enter into the Promised Land with them still around us and within us, we, like the Israelites, should not enjoy it. They would harass us, and disturb us on every side. What makes us so miserable as our tempers, our faults? Heaven itself, with these enemies unconquered, would be spoiled. So we too must first fight and conquer, then rest and enjoy.

To-day I am going to speak to those amongst you, who have started on the Heavenly journey, who are battling, though perhaps only feebly, against your

foes. I hope as I do so each one of you will ask herself. "Does this apply to me? Am I fighting at all?" Some I know are doing so. Some I fear are not. Oh, then let to-day be like a roll call, summoning every member of this class to battle. It is a glorious fight. The army is our God's, it goes out to conquer evil. Every one of us has been baptised into that army. Shall any go on acting as cowards, as deserters who shrink from battle. No, rather resolve from this afternoon to become a real, earnest, fighting soldier.

Now our enemies, like those of the Israelites, are many in number, they are always showing themselves, they give us no peace. When did you last have an opportunity of fighting a battle? Probably not many hours ago. Perhaps, just before you came here something happened to try you, to provoke you. Angry feelings rose up in your heart, there was a battle to fight against your temper. Perhaps as you came here and were talking with your friends, you remembered some story against an acquaintance, some disagreeable thing that acquaintance had done to you, did you feel inclined to tell it? did you wish to say hard words about that person? If so, there was a battle to fight against unkindness. Yes, and the enemies are so numerous, that I think you may even have had a battle to fight since you have been in this room. How was it when we were singing that hymn? how was it when we were on our knees? Did not earthly, every day subjects come into your minds, and try to draw them away from the words you were saying to God. Was there no battle for you to fight against wandering thoughts?

The battles then are very constant, how do you meet them? Do you fight?

Just because they are so frequent, many of us, like

the Israelites, grow downhearted. "I can't be always fighting," "My sins so often get the better of me, its no use going on," "Is this weary warfare to last my whole life through." These are the thoughts which, at times, come into our hearts.

Oh, my friends, at those moments I think God feels very tenderly for us. He knows how tired out we are, and how weak we feel. But yet He tells us to have courage. I think He would use to us the same words that He used to the Israelites. Look at them again, and read them as spoken to yourselves, Deut. xx. 1-5, 8.

"When thou goest out to battle . . . be not afraid, for the Lord thy God is with thee . . . Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, . . . for the Lord . . . is He that goeth with you, to fight for you . . . to save you."

Have courage for your own sake, and for the sake of others too. If one soldier in a battle loses heart and grows timid, and cowardly, fear may spread from him to others, till a general panic follows (see verse 8). And it is the same in the Heavenly fight, if you shrink from the battle with sin, those fighting by your side, your friends, your relations will very likely faint as well as you. Then be strong, be brave.

Let me speak to you of two thoughts which should help to give us courage.

(1) The army of Christ is an "*exceeding great army*," you cannot see all who belong to it, yet they are fighting by your side against the very same enemies that trouble you. How many Israelites were there when they started from Egypt? (600,000 men.) That was a great many. But Christ's army is far, far larger, it is "a multitude which no man can number." *He has real, earnest fighting soldiers in every town, in every village, I hope. Some are to be found in rich*

houses, some in miserable hovels, some in our quiet country houses, some up attic stairs in London garrets. Some of His soldiers fight their daily battles in service, some in houses of business, some are young girls fresh and happy, who have, perhaps, only lately joined the fighting ranks of Christ's army, others are old and sick, and for them the fight will soon cease, the Promised Land draws near. What different lives then His soldiers lead, how different they are in every way, excepting this: that all are fighters, and all need courage. "They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother: 'be of good courage'" (Is. xli. 6).

Does it not strengthen you to think of these great numbers fighting with you against evil?

The thought of numbers is always stirring. We feel this when thousands are met together in one Church, or one hall, to worship God. How solemn the prayers and the hymns seem when a multitude joins in them. How our hearts throb as the great mass of sound rises to God.

I remember standing on a balcony which overlooked Hyde Park on the day the Prince of Wales returned from India. Thousands were there to meet him. And as he drove through the cheering crowd, how stirring it was to feel that every man and woman out of that multitude had come together with the same object, to greet England's Prince.

Then if this is so, if the thought of numbers does stir our hearts, let us take courage from the thought of Christ's exceeding great army, which is fighting with us.

But the Bible gives us a better reason still for having courage. See Deut. xx. 1, 4 "The Lord is with thee" and that brings me to the other thought of which I would speak to you.

(2) *The Lord Jesus Himself is our Captain.* See who was the real Captain of the Israelitish army (Josh. v. 13-15). Before the siege of Jericho, a stranger with a sword in His hand appeared to Joshua, who, not knowing Him, asked "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries." The Lord Jesus, for the stranger, it is believed, was He Himself, answered "as Captain of the host am I come." And Joshua fell on his face and did worship. And the stranger said "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

He, too, is our Captain, "the Captain of our Salvation" (Heb. ii. 10), to us also He says "As Captain of the host am I come." He who fought the same battles Himself during the thirty-three years He was on earth, He leads us on now. Surely the ground on which we fight our daily struggles, surely the kitchen and the workroom seem to become "holy" when we remember that He stands by our side. Shall we not, like Joshua, often look up to Him and "worship" between the battles? Shall we not ask Him for His orders, and say: "What saith my Lord unto His servants?"

Now how has it been with you hitherto? How have you fought your battles. Have you kept down temper, and crushed selfishness, and driven away hard unkind thoughts? Or have these sins, these enemies generally won the victory over you?

Perhaps some are feeling "I do want to win, but yet very often I am defeated."

Then let me ask, "have you, when the enemy was near, remembered your Captain? Have you trusted yourself to Him?" Perhaps not.

Oh start anew, only with this difference, and take courage. If you will let Him, the Captain will fight *with you*, and for you, and through Him you will win *the battle*.

See Josh. xxiii. 8-11. The Israelites had been very victorious over their enemies, none could stand against them, and what was the reason (verse 8, 10). They had "cleaved unto the Lord." So Joshua urges them to go on cleaving unto the Lord as they had done unto this day. "For the Lord . . . He it is that fighteth for you, as He hath promised you." And we too must cleave to the Captain, we must keep looking to Him, and we shall find that those who cleave to Him do win.

Many hundred years ago, in the days when Christ's servants were often tortured and put to death for serving their Master, a man named Euplius was taken before a heathen judge merely because he was known to read the New Testament. The judge ordered that he should be racked, that is, fastened to a machine which stretched and tore all his limbs and put them out of joint. Whilst bearing this awful pain Euplius kept "cleaving" to his Lord and looking up to Him. "Oh Lord," he would say, "I thank Thee even for this, guard Thou me, who am suffering thus for Thee." A stranger who was looking on exclaimed, "Euplius cease this folly, adore the gods and you shall go free." What a temptation, what a battle to fight! But Euplius answered: "I adore Christ and hate your false gods. Do what you will with me, I am a Christian." And all the while he continued to pray: "Help me Lord Jesus. Be with me, Lord Jesus. For Thee do I suffer thus." After he had been tortured a long time, the judge commanded that the racking should cease. "Worship the gods, Euplius," he said, "and you shall be set at liberty." But again looking up to his Lord for strength, Euplius replied, "I worship the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God in three Persons, I am a Christian." So the pain began afresh, and this time worse even than before. And all the while Euplius



continued to say: "Be with me, oh Lord; strengthen me, Lord; keep me faithful to Thee, Lord; for Thee do I suffer thus, oh Lord;" and other words of the same kind. As his strength gradually failed him, he went on repeating these exclamations with his lips only—his voice was gone, till at last death came to him, and his spirit passed away into the presence of his Saviour.

Was not this struggle a fearful one? did it not need courage? Yet how grandly he won the victory. Now was this because Euplius was very strong and brave? I think not. I think he would tell you that he triumphed so, merely because he was all the time cleaving to his Lord and trusting to His strength: and Jesus fought for him and with him, and made him able to win the battle.

On the other hand those who go out to battle trusting to themselves, and to their own strength, may well be afraid. They have nothing but defeat ahead.

On one occasion God warned the Israelites not to attack the enemy, for if they did so the Heavenly Captain would not be with them. They however thought they were strong enough to gain a victory all by themselves; see what happened (Deut. i. 42-45). The enemy came out "and chased them as bees do, and destroyed them." They had gone to battle presumptuously. Don't be like them. Cleave unto the Lord as the temptation comes. Then you may have courage.

"Distrust thyself, but trust His strength,  
In Him thou shalt be strong.  
His weakest ones may learn at length  
A daily triumph song."

To show you still more plainly what I mean by *trusting or cleaving to the Heavenly Captain in every temptation*, let us take an instance.

Christ's servants are often laughed at for doing what is right, and this laughter, this ridicule is a sharp weapon very hard to meet. Have you found it so? A girl goes to the Holy Communion, and when she comes back from church some of her fellow-servants begin to tease her, and joke at her about it. This she dislikes very much, and perhaps she resolves that she will give up doing what causes all the teasing; she will go no more to the Lord's altar.

Or she has always been accustomed to read her Bible, but a new fellow-servant has lately arrived, and this friend, who shares the same room, laughs at her for reading God's word. At first, to escape the ridicule, she perhaps only takes out her Bible when quite alone, and then little by little she gives up doing so at all.

Now what has caused these sad defeats? why did the enemy win the victory? Probably because she went to meet him in her own strength, because she forgot the Captain who would have fought for her and with her, then came defeat, and faintheartedness followed.

But let me tell you of one who had much the same sort of battle to fight, and who won it bravely. I heard the other day of a little workhouse girl, of fourteen years of age, who went out to service. Emma was a good girl, she loved and served the Lord Jesus, and the first night that she arrived in her new place she knelt down as usual to say her prayers. The cook with whom she slept never prayed, and with rough, loud laughter she joked at Emma for doing so. But the child stood firm. Night after night and morning after morning she knelt in prayer to the Father in Heaven. After a time the cook ceased to tease her. And one day when Emma rose from her knees, her companion surprised her by saying shyly,

“ Will you teach me the prayer you say? ” Of course she did so gladly. And in time that cook became, through the little girl's influence, a servant of Christ's, and a regular communicant.

Now what had made Emma able to meet temptation so bravely? What had made her keep on saying her prayers through the ridicule? Surely it was that all the while she was trusting to the Captain's help, she was cleaving to Him, and asking Him to make her strong and brave. And therefore she was victorious.

Have any of you difficulties of this kind? Are you called to meet ridicule? If so take courage, hard as it is. You are not alone in your trouble. “ Others have had trial of cruel mocking ” (Heb. xi. 36). Others have fought against the same enemy and have won the battle. Only cleave to the Captain as they did, and you will win too. The Lord Jesus *is* with you; look to Him for His strength in this and in every battle, fight as you would fight if you could see Him by your side. Then He will say to you too those words which were often on His lips when He was on earth, “ *Fear not,* ” and His strength shall make you strong.

None of us can tell how much longer we may have to fight; there may be only a few more foes to meet before death comes to us with His quiet rest. On the other hand there may be years before us of wrestling with the enemy. Many fierce battles may be still ahead. Do not shrink from the thought, the Lord Jesus will be with you. He says “ as Captain of the host am I come. ” Cleave to Him, and then “ be strong and of a good courage . . . for the Lord, He it is that doth go with thee. He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee ” (Deut. xxxi. 6).

“ Life's fight well won,  
Life's race well run,  
Life's work well done,  
Then comes rest. ”

## XVI.

### “THE HEAVENLY FRIEND.”

(This Lesson was given on New Year's Day.)

As we stand to-day at the beginning of another year, I think we must all feel inclined to do two things: to look back, and to look forward.

Eighteen hundred and eighty — has passed away from us for ever; all its joys and all its sorrows are gone, its temptations and struggles are over, and we cannot bring back one of them.

“The year is gone, beyond recall,  
With all its hopes and fears,  
With all its bright and gladdening smiles,  
With all its mourners' tears.”

And how have we spent these twelve months? If, during one of them, God had sent His angel of death to call us away into the unseen land, would His messenger have found us honouring, serving, obeying the Heavenly Master?

I think as we look back there must be much that we now feel sorry for, many opportunities of helping others wasted, many temptations not fought against, many sins which must have grieved our God, and for which we need His pardon.

But I hope there is also a brighter side to this past year. I hope and believe that during the latter part of it, some of us at any rate have been drawn more to God, have been longing more to serve Him, have been trying to lead more religious lives. If this is so, thank God for it, it is He who has been calling you to Himself, and He has rejoiced to find you

listening to His call. Surely the year in which we first turn to Jesus must always remain a bright one to us. And if, having given yourselves to Him now, you go on faithfully till death comes, 188— will be written in golden letters on your memories. You will remember it gladly not only here but hereafter, when, standing in the presence of your Lord, you will receive the crown promised to them that love Him. Its troubles, its trials, all else will be forgotten, except the glad fact "it was then I turned to Jesus."

But we must not only look back, we must also look forward, and to me this is much the most awful of the two. We know the past, the future lies before us hidden in darkness. Who can tell what joys, what troubles, what temptations, are in store for us?

"We know not what this year may bring,  
Or who its close shall see;  
Oh grant us grace thou Heavenly King,  
To live, or die, for Thee."

It is, indeed, a solemn thing to stand at the beginning of a new year, the known behind, the unknown stretching out before us.

What do we need to make us able to bear the thought? Surely we need a *friend* who will be with us all through.

A little child is going to school for the first time, she feels frightened and lonely, she cannot tell what it will all be like. Then a friend says, "You shall come with me, and I will look after you." How different everything seems then, how the little one dries her eyes, and trots off quite happily holding the hand of her friend. Or again; one of you grown-up girls is going to your first place. You don't know *much* about service, you dislike the thought of being *with strangers*, you dread the loneliness. Then perhaps

you hear that in the situation to which you are going you will find a friend, a girl whom you knew and liked at school. How your face brightens up. How everything seems changed to you now!

And so in looking forward to this unknown new year, with all its dangers and anxieties, what we need is a friend to help us.

Now I want you to tell me what you think a friend should be like. We can't make real friends with everybody; they must have certain qualities, certain things in them, before we can look on them as friends. What is it that you require? First of all I am sure you want your friend to *love* you. She must be very fond of you or else you won't care much about her friendship. Then don't you think she ought to *understand* you, to know what you think and feel, to know what makes you happy or unhappy, what gives you pain or pleasure? Again, you do not want a friend who is living in Australia or America, you want one who can be *near* you, and can listen to all you have to say. And lastly, I wonder if you will agree with me, that a friend should be wiser and older than one is oneself, so that she may be able to give us *help* and advice when we need them.

A real friend then must love us, must understand us, must be near us, must be able to help us.

Now, on the threshold of this new year, there is a friend for each of you, a friend who sticketh closer than a brother (Prov. xviii. 24), and that friend is the Lord Jesus Christ. He, the Holy One, He, the King of kings and Lord of lords, says, "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . I have called you friends" (John xv. 15).

Is He the kind of friend you want? I think so.

(1) *He loves you.* (See Jer. xxxi. 3): "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Yes, He loves you

more deeply, more tenderly than anyone else can ever love you. The love of earthly friends sometimes grows cold. You all probably can point to people and say, "Once he, or she, cared for me very much, now all is changed." But the love of Jesus changes not; it is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever (Heb. xiii. 8), it is "an everlasting love."

(2) *He understands you and feels for you.* (See Exod. iii. 7), "I have surely seen the affliction of my people . . . and have heard their cry . . . I know their sorrows." How seldom our earthly friends quite understand us. We tell them our troubles, and they want to be kind, but we see by their faces that they don't really take in what we feel. Perhaps they have never felt the same, and so they don't understand.

Our heavenly friend has felt like us; He has "borne our griefs," "He knows our sorrows." For thirty years He lived the life of a working-man at Nazareth, a life very much like some of yours. He was poor, He was often tired, He was disappointed in those with whom He had to do, He was spoken against, He was tempted. Surely He understands and feels for you in the hard struggles you sometimes have with life? Yes, and He feels for you in the little difficulties as well as in the great ones. Nothing is too small for His notice. Does He not know when even a sparrow falls to the ground? And are you not of much more worth in His eyes than many sparrows?

(3) *He is always near you.* (See Exod. iii. 12): "Certainly I will be with thee." None of our other friends can say this. They have sometimes to go away and leave us, and God knows how we miss them. But Jesus never leaves us. All through this *past year* He has been with you, very close to you.

He was with you as you got up in the dark of these cold winter mornings. He was with you as you did your cooking, and sweeping, and washing, and sewing. He was with you when you lay down to rest, with you through the night hours, when the Bible specially tells us, "He giveth His beloved sleep" (Ps. cxxvii. 2). And so it will be during this coming year. "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. xxviii. 20) He says.

(4) *He can help you* (see 2 Chron. xx. 9): "When evil cometh upon us . . . then Thou wilt hear, and help." How many thousands have found these words come true! The help He gives has made them brave, and patient, and firm, and strong when "evil" came, so that they were able to say: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). This help is offered to you; I know you want it, will you have it?

And now let me ask you, how have you treated this best of friends during the past year? Have you obeyed Him faithfully? Have you loved Him as He deserves to be loved? I feel sure we all wish that we had behaved differently towards Him.

If so, how shall we treat Him during this new year? shall the weeks and days of 188— find us still neglecting and dishonouring Him? God forbid!

Now I can only talk to you of two ways in which I want to behave towards Him myself; two ways in which I want you to behave towards Him.

I. BRING ALL YOUR JOYS, AND TROUBLES, AND TEMPTATIONS TO HIM. You do this with your earthly friends; you find real comfort and help in telling them everything. Will you not do the same by the tender Heavenly Friend?

"What a Friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear;  
What a privilege to carry,  
Everything to Him in prayer."



As I said before, we cannot tell what joys, and troubles, and temptations lie ahead, but we are sure that some of each are awaiting us. Do not enjoy and bear them alone; carry them to our Lord. Troubles take our thoughts away from Him and separate us from Him, if we bear them alone. Have you not found it so? But if we bring them to Jesus, they draw us closer to Him.

Girls often tell each other of the things that try them in their places or their homes; they tell each other when they are ill and out of spirits; they tell each other of their sweethearts to whom they hope soon to be married. Do they tell their Lord too? Do they treat Him as a real friend? I wish they did so more. Oh, speak to Him often in your hearts during the day, speak to Him of all you feel, and wish, and think. Tell Him when you are weary, remembering that He was weary too. Tell Him when you are tempted to give up struggling, and to think it all no use, for He was tempted too. Tell Him when disappointments, and vexations, and worries come, for He has suffered too. Tell Him when you are glad, for He sent the joy.

If we live to the end of this year, I hope the angels will be able to say of us that during its months, "They told Him all things" (Mark vi. 30).

(2) LET US TRY MUCH HARDER THAN WE HAVE EVER TRIED BEFORE NOT TO GRIEVE OUR LORD.

When we have dear earthly friends staying with us, we are very careful not to say anything or do anything which would pain them. We can't bear to bring on their faces a look of sorrow or disappointment. Let us then strive to feel this, only far more so, with our Heavenly Friend. Every time we sin, though we cannot see Him, we may feel sure that we *do bring a look of grief over His face.*

Once when He was on earth, one of His disciples, St. Peter, sinned very badly against Him. You remember the story; you remember how St. Peter told a lie, and, in a moment of fear, disowned Jesus, saying he was not His disciple. And the Lord who heard him do it just turned round and looked at him. That was all He did; but there was such sorrow, such disappointed, pained, tender love in the Lord's look that St. Peter forgot his fear, forgot everything, I think, but that one fact, that he had grieved his Heavenly Friend. And so he went out and wept bitterly (Luke xxii. 54-63).

As the temptations of this new year arise let us strive so to obey the Lord Jesus that we may bring a look of pleasure and not of pain into His face.

Only a few words more:

At this season our friends give us their good wishes: "A merry Christmas and a happy new year to you," how often these words are said.

Now I have been wondering what the good wish is that our Heavenly Friend has for us. If we could see Him and hear Him speak to us now, what would He say?

Would His wish be that no trials or sorrows should sadden us during the coming year? I think not. He knows too well that trouble may often bring us much blessing through the lessons it teaches. Would His wish be that great riches should fall to our share in 188—? I think not. Money might be only a danger to us.

What then can His good new year wish be?

Perhaps it is this: that during the coming months of the new year we "may be always ready" (Matt. xxiv. 44); ready to stand before Him if He come again ere its days are ended; ready to meet His messenger of death, should he fetch us during one of its hours.

We talk so hopefully and confidently of all we shall do during this new year. But we don't know in the least how many of its days may be given to us. Before a few weeks are past the Master may have sent for some of us, this messenger, this angel of death with the cold hand and the firm grasp, from which none can escape.

It seems to me then that our Heavenly Friend's new year wish to us is: "Therefore be ye also ready," and don't only be ready now to meet Him, at the beginning of the year when your hearts are stirred with longings after a holier life, but be ready every day and every hour of 188—; be ready by giving the Friend in Heaven the trust, and the love, and the obedience He ought to have.

"Jesus, precious Saviour,  
Make us all Thine own,  
Make us Thine for ever,  
Make us Thine alone.

Let each day, each moment  
Of this glad new year,  
Be for Jesus only,  
Jesus, Saviour dear.

Then, oh blessed Saviour,  
Never need we fear,  
If Thy grace and favour  
Crown our bright new year."

## XVII.

### THE REFINER'S FIRE.

**HAVE** you ever had in your purse a new sovereign ? If so you know how brightly the gold shines, how clear and pure it is. We find the same thing by looking inside a gold watch ; as you wind it up you can see the reflection of the key and of your hand in it, because the gold is so bright.

But gold and silver do not come out of the ground like this. When first dug out they look more like lumps of earth ; inside is the gold or the silver all dull and colourless, round it are dirt, and bits of copper, and tin, and other metals. These must first be cleaned away, or "purged away." Do you know how that is done ? There is a person whose business it is, and he is called a "Refiner." Well, the refiner takes the gold or the silver, just as it is when it comes out of the earth, and he puts it in a heated furnace. There the dirt and dross are burned away, and the gold becomes clear and beautiful. Some bits of gold need more burning than others. In that case the furnace is more heated, and the metal remains longer in it. All this the refiner understands. He knows exactly how long each piece of gold or silver must be in the furnace ; he watches the burning away of all the dirt and dross with the greatest earnestness : and he lets this burning go on till the gold becomes pure and bright, so bright that as a looking-glass it reflects other things, so bright that he can see his own likeness in it.

Now the Bible uses "the Refiner's fire" as a kind of parable about ourselves.

We, too, have dirt and dross all around us. How? In our faults and bad habits. And our great Refiner, the Lord Jesus Christ, wants to purify these away. So He puts us into a furnace that He may do so.

See Mal. iii. 3, "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness"; and Zech. xiii. 9, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my Name, and I will hear them. I will say it is My people, and they shall say the Lord is my God."

And what are the furnaces in which our Lord burns away the dirt and dross, or the faults of His people? I think He uses two kinds of furnaces.

1. *The furnace of trouble and affliction* (see Isa. xlvi. 10).

"I have refined thee . . . I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction?" Think of all the holiest people you know, those who shine very brightly for Jesus. Have they for the most part had smooth, happy lives, or have they had a great deal of trouble and been often in the "furnace of affliction." I think we generally find that Christ's holiest servants have known much suffering, in that furnace their faults were burned away, it was there they became so patient, and sympathetic, and loving, and bright.

One very holy woman whom I know has had much trouble in her home; early in life she fell in love with a man who trifled with her, and deceived her into thinking that he cared for her. This nearly broke her heart. Then bad health came on, and for years she has been a complete invalid, each day bringing its daily portion of pain and suffering. But I cannot tell *you how bright and cheerful her sick room is*. For all *who go to see her she has a word of sympathy and*

help; she never complains, her constant remark is "how good everybody is to me!" And from her bed she does much work for her Master. Even when in the greatest pain herself, she will speak to others of His love, and show an interest in their struggles and their difficulties.

Another very earnest Christian whom I have known, was a man who through no fault lost a great deal of money, and was reduced to the most terrible poverty. After having been in very comfortable circumstances, he became all at once so poor that he and his children had often hardly enough to eat. For some time he could find no employment; he indeed knew much of the furnace of affliction. And I wish you could have seen that man's firm, cheerful trust in God. When he needed anything very badly for himself, or his children, he prayed, he waited, he hoped, and something always did turn up to help him on. Truly in both these servants of Christ the dirt and dross had been burned away by the Refiner's fire.

How often those who are surrounded with every blessing and comfort are yet discontented, whilst from others to whom trouble and poverty have left hardly anything we never hear a murmur. I read once of a little boy in a London garret who was in bed on a cold, frosty, winter evening. The clothes that covered him were so thin and scanty that they could not keep him warm. So his mother put over him some old boards which happened to be lying by in a corner of the room. With a bright smile he said to her, "Oh, mother, I *am* sorry for the poor people who have no boards to cover them these cold nights." Don't you think that in him discontent had been burned away in the furnace of trouble and poverty?

How is it with you? Perhaps your lives have been smooth and pleasant. God has not yet seen fit to send

you much suffering. If so, thank Him for the happiness you have enjoyed. But, in the future, sickness or affliction may lie before you, dark shadows of suffering may be ahead. A girl to whom I spoke words of this kind last year, and who then was as bright and joyous as any of you, is now an incurable invalid. She has nothing to look to in this world but pain and sickness, and then death. Oh, if to you too trouble of any kind should come, remember that it is the Refiner's furnace of fire, and that in it He wants to purge away your dross, your faults.

And He does not only use for this the great troubles of our lives; any vexation, any disappointment, any small suffering that falls to your share is part of the Refiner's fire. You have expected some pleasure, and after all it does not come; you hope that you have found a nice situation, and through no fault of yours it falls through; you are obliged to live with someone whose sharp tongue is very trying; you are going to a new place and shrink from facing strangers; you are unwell and get easily tired; these and hundreds of other daily trials are all parts of the furnace of trouble. They are little things, but they cause us pain; they are little things, but through them, if we bear them well, we may become cleansed, and pure, and bright like the gold that has been in the furnace. Disappointments can burn away our over-fondness for the things of this world and make us think more of the next; trying tempers in our companions can burn away our impatience and teach us to give soft answers; ill-health can burn away the softness which makes us give in so easily, and help us to become strong and enduring. And when God sends us these troubles He is saying, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely *purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin*" (*Isa. i. 25*).

The other furnace in which the Lord purifies His people is:

2. *The furnace of temptation.* "If thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation." Probably you have sometimes thought, "I wish I could get a place where there are fewer temptations, fewer difficulties; I should like to find everything made easy for me in serving God, and to have none of these hard struggles." But see what the Bible says about this (James i. 2, 12), "*Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.*" How strange these words seem to most of us! Temptation is to be looked upon as a "joy," as a "blessing"! Why? Because in that furnace of temptation some of our dross, some of our faults, may be burned away.

For instance, a girl has a quick temper, and the people she lives with give way to her in everything; she has no temptation to be put out. But also her temper is not cured. She goes somewhere else, and gets amongst companions who treat her like the rest of the world. Often now she is tempted to be cross, but she wants to serve God, and she tries hard to keep back angry words. In this furnace of temptation her fault is being burned away, every day she grows gentler and more patient. I read once of a young man who found the truth of this in his own life. At home his brothers and sisters tried him very much; there seemed daily to be rubs of every kind, and he was constantly getting angry, and being sorry for it afterwards. The idea then struck him that he would leave home and find some place with fewer temptations. He would go into what is called a monastery, that is a house where men live together, and all try and do good to others,



by visiting the sick and teaching little children, &c. The monastery life was a very strict one, only at certain hours might the members even speak to each other, and our friend found that he was never tempted to be angry. He soon got to think his fault was gone. But one day when he was carrying a jar of water his foot slipped, the jar fell from his hand, was broken to pieces, and all the water spilt. At once angry words and oaths rose to his lips. Then he saw that his temper was just the same as ever, that it was not cured one bit. Had he stayed in the furnace of temptation, where the great Refiner had placed him, and met the temptation bravely, his fault would in time have been burned away.

Take another instance; a girl is selfish. Constantly a choice is put before her of pleasing herself or of pleasing others; the one is easy, the other is hard, which shall she do? Again she is in the furnace of temptation; if she chooses right and gives up her own wishes some of that dross of selfishness is burned away. The next time the struggle will be easier.

Or perhaps she is timid, and afraid to speak the truth, when she fears a scolding may come. She longs to shield herself by making an excuse that is false. She is in the furnace of temptation. If she bravely says what is true, some of the dross of cowardice will be burned away. She will get in time to think it impossible to tell a lie.

Therefore count it "joy" when you fall into temptation. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

But some will say, "I have been in the furnace of trouble, and the furnace of temptation, and am none the better for it. My troubles and temptations have *done me no good.*" Possibly. In this we are unlike *the gold*, which must come out of the furnace cleansed

and purified, it cannot help itself. We on the other hand may take our troubles and temptations in a wrong way; we may murmur discontentedly at the troubles, and not resist the temptations. And then we shall have been in the furnace, but we shall come out with the dirt and dross still clinging to us as before.

But oh, my friends, do not let this be the case with you. Do not so disappoint the great Refiner of souls. Just as the earthly refiner watches earnestly the gold, to see it become pure and bright, so He, the Lord Jesus, watches us. The last time you were in trouble, the last time you were in temptation, He, with loving eyes was looking to see whether you were being cleansed from your faults. His tender hand lights the furnace, He knows how much we need to purge away our dross. How the thought of this can help us. "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold" (Job xxiii. 10); and the trial of our faith is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth" (1 Pet. i. 7).

You remember too how the earthly refiner lets the gold be burned till it is bright enough to give back his own likeness. Just so the Heavenly Refiner looks to see His likeness in us. Are we letting the little daily troubles and temptations burn away our selfishness, our idleness, our habit of speaking unkindly of others, our carelessness, our cowardice, our rough words, till we are giving back likenesses of Him who never thought of Himself, who worked for others till He was wearied out, who was loving and gentle to all, who was brave enough to willingly face death itself in its most awful form?

Oh, for the future, as your troubles and temptations come to you, remember to take them as part of the Refiner's fire, the fire lit by Jesus to purify you from sin. Do not say it "is so hard;" "anything else would be easier to bear;" "I can't do that," "I don't like to

do this." The gold would not get bright without being placed in the fire, and you cannot become pure and holy without the furnaces of trouble and temptation.

Learn rather to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (Ps. cxix. 71); "I count it joy when I fall into divers temptations" (James i. 2); and to feel this more and more look on, look up into heaven itself. Picture the Lord Jesus on His throne, He that dwells in the light that no man can approach, He that is clothed in kingly splendour. Round Him are choirs of Angels, but nearer even to the throne than they is a multitude so great that no man can number it, and which is made up of all nations, and kindreds, and people. "What are these, and whence came they?" (Rev. vii. 13.)

The answer is full of hope to us when troubled and tempted. It is this, "These are they which came out of great tribulation" (verse 14). The martyrs are there; they have borne trouble and suffering of all kinds. The saints of God are there; they when on earth have been tempted over and over again. All those in that vast crowd have been in the great Refiner's fire, and therefore they stand before the throne. And do you suppose they do anything but rejoice at the thought of their past sorrows? Every tear they shed seems precious to them now, every temptation they overcame is remembered with gladness. The thought of the Refiner's fire is full of joy to them, for did it not cleanse and prepare them for God's presence?

I think their glad song of thanksgiving has a message in it to the tried and tempted. I think they too cry to us, "Glory in tribulations" (Rom. v. 3). "Count it all *joy* when you fall into divers temptations" (James i. 2), for thus shall you be made ready to join us here.

And are they not right? If the little fretting, *worrying* temptations as well as the harder battles, if

the little daily vexations as well as the great anxieties and sorrows are the Refiner's fire, in which you may be purified, would you be without them? No, go boldly forward, welcome the struggle, for there the crown of life is won; welcome the passing trouble, for through it you shall reach to the unending gladness.

"Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John xvi. 20).

"*Blessed* is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life that the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James i. 12)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The latter part of this Lesson has been suggested by a passage in Mr. Body's *Life of Temptation*.

## XVIII.

### LOVING OUR LORD "MORE AND MORE."

A FRIEND of mine one day in speaking to a Bible class of young men said to them :

"When you do something which is disagreeable to you, but which is right, what makes you do it? What reason have you?"

"I do it to get to Heaven," replied one member; "I do it so as not to go to Hell," said another; and all round the class answers of the same kind were given. Those young men seemed to be trying to lead good lives in order to be rewarded, or to escape punishment in the world to come.

I put the same question to you, "Why are you trying to obey the Lord Jesus? What is your reason?"

I hope that you have a better reason than the one they gave. Those who resist sin in order to be safe from Hell are like a thief who keeps his hands out of your pocket only because he is afraid of gaol. Those who try to be good so as to go to Heaven, are like the people who give up drink and join a temperance society, just for the sake of the entertainments, and the shillings which they hope to get. A religion of this kind is little else than a selfish looking forward to the good things of the next life and which I fear it may never get. Is this what our Lord wishes for in His servants?

No indeed. "Lovest thou me?" that is His question to each one. He wants us to obey Him out of love, are you doing so? Is that your reason?

*Love* made His disciples give up trade, home, friends, *everything* for Him. Love made them bear dangers,

and hardships, and death for Him. Do you think they did all this merely to go to Heaven? Their own words tell us. "The love of Christ," they say, "constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14), it forces us to obey Him, it makes us do so, because we want so much to please Him.

Is it the same now? is it love which makes Christ's best servants lead such earnest, holy lives, or do you suppose they are merely thinking of a hoped-for reward? Not long ago I went to hear one of the greatest preachers in London, a man who is working himself to death almost, in order to win others to Jesus. He preached to his people most earnestly, about the importance of turning to God now, of not delaying, and at the end of his sermon he said, "I speak to you in the Name of Him who died for us all. I speak to you in the Name of *my King, my Lord, my Saviour.*" Had you listened to the way he said those words, I think you would have felt as I did, that it was love for the Lord Jesus Christ which made that man what he was. Again many of you have heard of Miss Havergal, the lady who wrote "Thy life was given for me," and others of the most beautiful hymns which we sing in Church. If you have read anything about her, you know what a very holy woman she was, how patiently she bore pain and suffering, how bravely she spoke for Christ, how earnestly she obeyed Him. And what made her so holy? It was love for her Lord. Listen to the words she says to Him in one of her hymns, she is thinking of His second coming at the last day, and she writes:

"Thou art coming, Thou art coming,  
We shall meet Thee on Thy way;  
We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee,  
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee  
All our hearts could never say.  
What an anthem that will be  
Ringing out our love to Thee,  
Pouring out our rapture sweet  
At Thine own all glorious Feet."

Now some of you may be thinking "I know all Christ's holiest servants have loved Him like this, and I should like to feel as they do, but at present I'm afraid that I only love Him a very little." If so, even if you do love Him but a very little, thank God for it. It is God the Holy Spirit who has put into your heart that little bit of love, and it shows, I hope, that the Lord Jesus has pardoned you, has accepted you as His servant.

But you want to get on, don't you? you want to become a better Christian. Then look at St. Paul's wish and prayer for you. Phil. i. 9: "This I pray," he says, "that your love may abound yet more and more." We are not to be satisfied with loving our Lord a little; we want to love Him "more and more," we want to love Him with that glowing, burning love with which His saints have loved Him.

"Jesus, my Lord, I Thee adore,  
Oh make me love Thee, more and more."

How then are we to get to love Him more and more?

Let me first point out what will *not* make us do so. A great preacher has told us very truly that we shall not increase our love for Jesus by examining it. Some people, he says, are always asking themselves "do I love my Saviour or do I not?" "Do I love Him more than I did or do I not?" They are like little children who pull up the plants in their gardens to examine the roots, and see whether they are growing. Don't be always rooting up your love to see if it has grown. Examining our feelings only chills them, and sends them away. Love will never come by looking for it.

*How, then, shall we learn to love Him more? Look again at St. Paul's wish for you. There is a word in*

it which seems to answer the question. "This I pray, that your love may abound more and more in *knowledge*."

Very often we say to each other, "since I have got to *know* you better I have grown so much more fond of you." Of course this is not the case with everybody. In getting to know some people better we love them less, because faults show themselves which we had not seen before; we are disappointed in them.

With our Lord this cannot be. In Him we shall never find anything ugly or disappointing. "He is altogether lovely."

Then if you want to love Him more, *get to know Him better*,

(1) *Out of the Bible*. Suppose some stranger were coming to stay in your parish or house, and a friend wrote you letters about her, telling where she had lived, what she had done, and what she thinks and says about different things. Should you not feel after a time "I seem quite to know her, though we have not yet met." Well then the Bible tells us about Jesus. It tells us where He lived, what He did and said. It teaches us how kind, and tender, and loving He was. It tells us all He was ready to suffer for us. It shows us what He was like, it shows us His beauty. The four Gospels have been called "four Pictures of Jesus Christ," just because they do all this.

In London one beautiful picture is sometimes exhibited by itself. People pay their money and go in, and sit down quietly, and gaze at it. They don't give one quick look and then go away, they study each part of it. And the more they know it the more they admire it.

Oh, "search the Scriptures" more, John v. 39. Read your Bibles earnestly, especially the four Gospels, *all the*



while gazing at our Lord, till you get to know Him better, till you know more of His beauty, and as you know Him more you will love Him more.

For instance, choose as your daily study during this month one out of the four Pictures of your Lord. Say the Gospel of St. Luke, and make up your mind to look at Jesus all the time you read, to notice everything He did and said, till you learn to know more of Him. Perhaps you have come to Luke vii. and are going to read verses 36-50. Then gaze at Jesus receiving so kindly and tenderly the poor sinful out-cast woman. How many people in London this afternoon would have roughly pushed her away, would have refused to speak to her before the others. Jesus was different. He the Holy One, let her kiss His feet, and wash them with her tears. He spoke to her perhaps the first words of pity and goodness that she had heard for a long time. Why? Not because He thought little of her guilt. But because, through all that awful degrading sin, He yet was able to love the poor sinner. As you read this story and look at the Saviour, do you not get to know more of His great love?

Or have you come to chapter xi. of St. Luke, and are going to read verses 37-45. Then look at Jesus surrounded by a crowd of Pharisees, people who had the outsides of goodness with hearts full of sin, people who pretended to be religious, but were not. He is speaking to them; listen to the indignant words which He uses about their untruthfulness, their hypocrisy. He, who was gentler and more pitiful than any one has been before or since, pours out burning words, which show His loathing for deceit. As you gaze at your Lord and see Him with these hypocrites, do you not get to know more of His perfect *purity*, and of His hatred for all that is not quite *straightforward*, quite true?

Once more, you are reading Luke xix; as you come to verses 41 and 42, gaze at Jesus as He stands on the hill, looking down on the town of Jerusalem. Gaze at Him shedding tears, because those to whom He had preached would not listen, those for whom He was going to die would not turn from sin. They were going to mock and insult Him, but yet His heart went out towards those men, and women, and children. He was waiting, longing, yearning to save them. (Many in England to-day, perhaps some here, are causing Him the same grief, they will pay no heed to His words.) Oh, as you watch Jesus on that hill, do you not get to know better His boundless patience and tenderness, and knowing Him better, will you not love Him more?

I have not time to give you other instances. I can only ask you to take a Gospel and read it this way by yourselves. Try through it to know Jesus better. We are told: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty" (Isa. xxxiii. 17). Only in Heaven will these words come fully true, but here even they are to a certain extent carried out. As, through our Bible, we study what He is like, and gaze at Him, we do in a measure "see the King in His beauty," we do feel that "He is altogether lovely."

It may seem hard at first, but there is a promise to those who keep on studying, and gazing, and trying to know Him. See Hos. vi. 3, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

And as I said before, knowing Him better you will love Him more.

But there is another way of getting to know Jesus besides out of the Bible. I spoke to you of a stranger who might be coming to stay in your house or parish. A friend had written you letters telling you about her. At last she arrives; you spend some days and

weeks with her and become very intimate. Then you say to her "I felt I knew you a little before you came, because I had read so much about you. But now that I have been with you, I know you better still."

So get to know Jesus better

(2) *By being more with Him in your daily life.* When you are with your friends you talk to them and consult them, and even when silent, you have a happy feeling that they are near; is it not so? Then as you go about your work, do it with Jesus. Speak to Him often, tell Him of your difficulties, tell Him all you feel, put yourself into His keeping, do each little act for Him, try and not lose a happy remembrance of His presence. The more you are with Him in this way, the more you will know Him, and the more you know Him the more you will love Him.

A clergyman was spending his summer holiday in Scotland, not far from Balmoral, the Queen's Castle, where she so often stays. One afternoon a heavy thunderstorm came on while he was out walking, and he took shelter in a neighbouring cottage. The old woman whose house it was invited him to sit down in her kitchen; the room was very neat and clean, and was made pretty by many little ornaments which stood on the table and mantelpiece. When the clergyman remarked on these, the old woman told him that the Queen, who often came in and paid her visits, had given her the pieces of china which he had been admiring. "Her Majesty," she said, "comes in and sits down in that chair so friendly-like." "Do you enjoy her visits?" asked the clergyman. "Oh yes," was the answer; "at first I was a bit frightened, but we have had so many talks together, and I know her so well, that I have got very fond of her now." And then she went on to say that it was thought the Queen was going to give a tea in the Castle to some of the

people of the neighbourhood. A few years ago she would have looked forward with fear to this, "but now," she added, "that Her Majesty has been so often with me here in my home, I shan't be afraid of going to her in her great palace."

Do you see why I have told you this story. It is because I want you to have the Lord Jesus much with you in your homes. I want you to get to know Him and love Him well now, so that when He calls you to meet Him in His Heavenly Home above, you may do it with joy and not with fear.

And whilst you are trying to know Jesus through the Bible, and through being much with Him in your daily life, you will need help, you will need some one to teach you about Him. Who can do this best?

Who could best help you to know that stranger whom we said might be coming to live in your parish? Of course only those who knew her well themselves. And so a friend, in writing to you about her, might very likely say, "I have known her all her life, and am therefore the best person possible to tell you about her."

So there is One who has known the Lord Jesus through all ages; I mean the Holy Spirit, the Heavenly Teacher of whom I spoke to you some weeks ago. He can help you best, as you try and get to know your Lord. Jesus said that He would do so (see John xv. 26), "When the Comforter is come . . . He shall testify of Me," that is "He shall teach you in your hearts about Me." And again see John xvi. 14, where Christ says: "He," that is the Holy Spirit, "shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Then as you read your Bible or go about your work, say often to the Holy Spirit "Teach me to know our Lord better, and so to love Him more."

"Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,  
 Taught by Thee we covet most  
 Of Thy gifts at Pentecost,  
 Holy, Heavenly Love."

And as with His help a daily deepening, daily growing love for Jesus comes into your heart, it will change your lives, it will make you better, more earnest Christians.

Love for our Lord will (1) make obedience to Him glad work; we like to please the friends whom we care for, doing things for them is a joy. (2) It will deepen your sorrow for sin. We cannot bear to vex those we are fond of, to bring a sad look into their face causes us real pain. (3) It will fill your heart with praise and thanksgiving. The service in Church will no longer seem to you dull and cold. You will not go only for the sermon as some perhaps do now. Whilst you sing "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving," "Let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker," "Serve the Lord with gladness . . . for the Lord is gracious, His mercy is everlasting," and other words of this kind, your whole soul will be full of joy because singing of Him and to Him, whom you love.

If then love for our Lord can so fill the hearts of His servants, and change their lives, surely we may well seek to know Him better, and love Him more.

"Lord, it is my chief complaint  
 That my love is weak and faint;  
 Yet I love Thee and adore,  
 Oh, make me love Thee more and more."

"I will love Thee, oh Lord, my strength" (Ps. xviii. 1).

## XIX.

### FOLLOWING OUR LORD.

ONE winter evening two girls were sitting by the fireside, in the kitchen of a farm-house. They were alone, and to judge by their faces their talk seemed a serious one.

"So you are going out to service at last Nettie?" said Martha. "Yes," replied Nettie, a tall, slight, fair-haired girl of about 19. "Mother can spare me now, and she wants me to leave home. It will seem strange and lonely at first, Martha, and I shall miss dreadfully the grave talks I have had lately with you, they have been such a help." She paused a moment and then she added, "I do want to serve the Lord Jesus in my new place, but I shall hardly know how to without some one to talk to me." "Do you remember, Nettie," said Martha, "three little words which Our Lord said several times to those who wanted to serve Him? *Follow thou Me*. I think He is saying them now to you."

"But *how* can I do it?" exclaimed Nettie; "when He was on earth people could easily follow Him about wherever He went, but how can I do it?"

You know the Bible says, "He left us an example that we should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21), said Martha.

"*But how?*" and again a puzzled troubled look came over Nettie's face. "His life was so different. He was God come down from Heaven, and He went about doing wonderful things and preaching. How can I follow in His steps when I'm in service?"

"I think I see how we can try and follow Him, only I can't put it into words so as to make you understand it, Nettie dear. But our Lord will show you Himself," added Martha affectionately, as she put her arm round her friend.

(I wonder, by the way, if each one of you knows what it is to follow Christ? I wonder if you could have put it so that Nettie would have understood?)

Well, at that moment Martha was called away, and Nettie sat on in the wooden armchair, looking into the fire and thinking. "He left us an example that we should follow in His steps. He said follow Me. *How am I to do it?*" murmured she to herself.

\* \* \* \* \*

After a time it seemed to Nettie as if the room had changed. The fire-place, and the stone floor, and the china plates over the dresser were all gone, and she fancied that she stood by a gate which led into a field, and that it was summer.

In front of her at some distance was a hill, and on the top of it was a beautiful city. A dazzling light came from out the city which seemed to be built of pure bright gold.

As Nettie looked and wondered, she saw that by her side, where Martha had been, was an Angel with white wings. "That," said he, pointing towards the hill, "is the city of our God, the holy Jerusalem" (Rev. xxi. 10, 11). Do you want to get there?"

"Oh yes!" said Nettie, longingly, with a sigh. "But how can I do so?"

The King of the city, replied the Angel, "has been down here just where you are standing, and He has travelled over the very ground that you have got to pass. If you will look down you will see the marks of His steps."

Nettie looked and saw that there were footmarks in

the long grass—footmarks which led through the gate, and across the field, and towards the bright city.

"The King, whose footmarks those are, says to you, *Follow me,*" continued the Angel.

At those words Nettie wondered all the more. She felt that she had heard them before, but she could not remember when. Then she saw that over the gateway was written, "*He hath left you an example that you should follow in His steps*" (1 Pet. ii. 21).

"The King came down to this earth," said the Angel, "on purpose that you might reach the city. He is very tender, very good; will you follow Him?"

Nettie looked up, her hands were clasped, tears stood in her eyes, and she did not seem to be speaking to the Angel as she answered: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest" (Matt. viii. 19).

Then it became plain that she was not alone. There was other people close to her, and they too were looking down to see the marks of the footsteps that they might follow them.

A young girl by Nettie's side began to talk to her. "I want to follow in the King's steps as closely as ever I can," she said, "but I am so afraid of growing tired and of giving up before we get to the bright city; will you come with me?"

So they walked along together to the end of the field where there was a wood. Now the wood was cool, and shady, and pleasant, bright gleams of sunlight lit up only parts of it. And at a little distance from the girls wood-cutters were thinning the trees.

"That's my cousin Jack," exclaimed Nettie; "I must go and have a talk with him."

"Oh, please don't," said her companion; "I am lame and cannot struggle through all that tangled mass of briars. So that if you go I shall be left all



alone. Then Nettie saw that close to her was a finger-post to direct travellers, and on it were written these words: "Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). And she looked down and noticed that the King's footsteps had not gone aside to the part of the wood where she wanted to be. "But I should so like to stop and rest and see my cousin cut the trees," she whispered to herself, when she was startled by a voice in front which said to her: "WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME" (John xxi. 22).

Awed by the voice, all the more so because she could not see the speaker, Nettie put her feet firmly in the footmarks, and turned away from the part of the wood which had seemed so attractive to her. At that moment these words came into her mind, she "left all, and rose up, and followed Him" (Luke v. 28).

As she walked along she noticed that there were some beautiful red and yellow pebbles by the side of a brook which ran round the edge of the wood.

"I must have some of those," she exclaimed, "they will make such lovely brooches." And forgetting all about the footmarks and where they led, she was soon on her knees picking up the beautiful coloured stones and putting them in her pocket. She had not been doing so very long before she heard some one sobbing and crying at a little distance from her. It was her poor friend whom she had left, and who was still trying to keep her eyes on the footsteps and to follow them. "I am *so* lonely and *so* tired," Marion was saying between her tears.

Then Nettie's conscience smote her. What had she been doing? She had forgotten to follow in the King's steps, she had thought only of her own selfish pleasure, and, because she had strayed out of the right

path, her friend was finding the journey very lonely, very hard.

At once she began to grope her way back, but it was some time before she could find the footsteps again. They did not seem so distinct as they had been before, and she had to stoop so as to see them at all. Looking down very earnestly, she said :

“O let me see Thy footmarks,  
And in them plant my own;  
My hope to follow duly  
Is in Thy strength alone.”

And Marion knew that Nettie was not speaking to her, but to the great King who had Himself gone the same journey.

For some moments the girls followed the footsteps very closely, till they came to a bit of high hilly ground where the grass was much trodden down. It looked as if He who had gone before them must have waited there some time.

“Do you think the King stopped here to rest?” said Marion. Then she noticed a finger-post on which was written, “He went up into a mountain apart to pray” (Matt. xiv. 23).

“We are following Him; let us do as He did,” said the friends to each other, and they knelt down and prayed. I think Nettie had much to say in those quiet moments. What do you suppose she asked of God? Surely she needed to ask forgiveness for having taken her own way and gone down to the brook; she needed to ask for strength to follow better, and that neither she nor her friend might get tired and give in before reaching the end of the journey.

The two girls rose from their knees refreshed and strengthened. They felt more earnest, more brave, more joyful. Soon the footmarks led them into the high road. It seemed very hot and glary on that warm

summer's day, but the steps were plain enough on the dusty road, and they could follow closely.

Straight in front of them, a good deal nearer than when they started, was the hill with the bright city; its light made their hearts glad.

Suddenly they noticed that the steps left the dusty road, went through a gate and into a field again.

"Must we follow here?" exclaimed Nettie; "it will take us so much out of our way." Yet before them were written up these words, "He went about doing good" (Acts x. 38); and the footmarks were very distinct.

"I want to keep straight on towards the city and not to lose any more time," said Marion.

"WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME," replied again that solemn voice; and they passed through the gate. The steps led on across the field through some trees and up to a cottage.

At the door of the cottage was standing a woman whom Nettie recognised as a friend who some years back had lived near her home. "I'm in sore trouble," said the woman; "my daughter is very ill, come in and see her."

In the kitchen they found a girl wrapped in a shawl, sitting by the fire. She was already far gone in consumption and was very pale. Her face lit up when Nettie and Marion entered.

"I have not seen a friend since Sunday," said she, "and it's so dull sitting here hour after hour, and week after week."

Nettie remembered the beautiful golden city and how much she wanted to get on towards it before evening, but she remembered too that the steps had led them to the cottage, and that the writing had said "He went about doing good." So she talked brightly and pleasantly, telling all the news she could remem-

ber; and as they rose to go the sick girl said, "I feel a lot better for having seen you."

Leaving the cottage they passed down the garden, and in the lane outside they met an old man much bent, who seemed to be blind, for he was feeling his way with a stick.

"Do you see a little white house down yonder?" he asked. "Yes," said Marion. "Well, that is mine," he went on, "and I have come further than usual, so that now I can't find my way back alone. Will you take me there?"

"Don't let us go, it is so tiring, and we must be getting on before night comes," whispered Marion, and Nettie felt half inclined to agree. But again they saw those words, "He went about doing good," and the footsteps led quite plainly down to the little white house. So following them they went with the old man, and they went cheerfully and gladly in order not to let him see that they found it hard.

When they got down to his cottage they were surprised to find that they were closer to the hill with the bright city on it than before they left the high road. They had been thinking that they were going out of their way. But no! the city was much nearer and its light brighter. They could already see the shining gold, and the gates of pearl and precious stones.

The journey however was long, and the girls were getting weary and footsore, they were beginning to lose heart and to long for some older person to be with them and help them. Then they heard the voice which had spoken before say,

"Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest" (Gen. xxviii. 15). And they were sure it was the King's voice, so they knew that He had not only been the journey before them,

but was with them now, though they could not see Him, and they took courage.

After a few moments the steps led them up to a little child with a grimy sickly face and ragged clothes, who was sitting by the side of the path, crying bitterly.

"Mother is on ahead and I can't catch her up; I'm too little," sobbed the child, and then he cried all the more.

"He wants us to carry him," said Nettie. "But he is so dirty," exclaimed Marion, remembering her own clean white dress; "surely it is not our place to do that." Then looking up she saw a finger-post on which was written, "It was here that the King washed the feet of some of the pilgrims," and underneath were these words:

"The servant is not greater than his Lord . . . Ye should do as I have done" (John xiii. 5, 16, 15).

The two girls thought a moment. "I suppose it wasn't His place to wash their feet," said Nettie. "No, indeed," answered her friend. "Then He must mean us to follow Him in doing kind things, even when they are not our place," said Nettie. And going up to the little, dirty, ragged child she took him in her arms and carried him very tenderly till they reached his mother.

By this time the road had grown rough, and steep, and stony. It was covered with sharp pebbles which cut and wounded their feet, making them cry out with pain. "I *can't* go on, it hurts me so," cried Nettie. And again the voice answered, "WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME." The King's footsteps here were plainer than ever, for they were marked out by drops of blood. And, by the side of the path, they noticed that there lay a crown of thorns, and a much used scourge, and bits of broken wood in the shape of a cross.

But yet the girls remarked that the footsteps had

not wavered, had not turned aside; they had gone on firmly through all this hard and painful part.

"The King," said Nettie, "can never have stopped to complain, and we won't do so either, though these sharp stones are cutting my feet terribly.

"Follow! follow! I would follow Jesus,  
Anywhere, everywhere, I would follow on."

Beyond this rough and suffering portion of their journey they reached a valley which lay at the very foot of the hill on which was the bright city. The hill threw a shadow over it; it was dark and gloomy, no sunlight there. And as they entered it they saw written up, "The Valley of the Shadow of Death."

Nettie trembled and drew her cloak round her.

But the footmarks plainly led on. She knew well where she was, but she knew too that the King had been here before her and was with her now, so she whispered, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). And on they went, on, on, till the footsteps led right up to a river, the river of death. Cold, and dark, and deep did its waters seem.

"Must we go down into them?" said Marion with a shudder. "Yes," replied her friend, "for the King did, and we follow Him." So white and trembling they stepped into the river, and as they did so the voice which had spoken before spoke again, and this time it was clearer, stronger, tenderer even than before. It said: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name and thou art mine" (Isa. xliii. 2, 1).

And Nettie answered:

"Down in the valley or in the cold river deep,  
Close beside my Saviour would my soul ever keep;  
He will lead me safely in the path that He has trod,  
Up to where they gather on the hill of God."

And when they reached the other side of the river behold they were on the very hill itself where the bright city stood, and its dazzling light shone full upon them. Many friends came forward to greet them, and a glad voice exclaimed: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4).

"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,  
Is He sure to bless?"

Asked Marion timidly. All joined in the reply:

"Angels, Martyrs, Prophets, Virgins,  
Answer, Yes."

And as they passed through the gates of pearl and entered the golden streets, they were lost to sight amidst songs of rejoicing.—

When Nettie woke up, for she had been asleep, she felt that she understood better what it was to follow Jesus. Her journey was not ended like in her dream, it was but just beginning. And she determined bravely that, in His strength, she would follow Him all her life long.

Now my story has been a very simple one; you all understand its meaning. You know that the bright City is Heaven, and the King our Lord Jesus Christ, who did indeed leave us an example that we should follow in His steps. And this afternoon He is saying to you again, "Follow Me." Some perhaps have never yet begun to do so. Oh, then, will you listen to His voice to-day and begin now the journey which ends in that bright city? Unless you follow Jesus here on earth, can you expect to follow Him to heaven when you die?

And His footsteps are plain enough before you. Sometimes you are tempted to take your own way and do things you like at wrong moments, perhaps to

read a book or talk to a friend, when you should be at your work. Then remember "Even Christ pleased not Himself." And sometimes you have opportunities of doing kind things to others, like visiting a sick person, or writing a letter to one who is sad and lonely, or making some little present which will give pleasure; then again the footsteps are very plain. "He went about doing good." And sometimes you can do a bit of extra work and so help a friend even when it is "not your place." Then, do not forget how your Lord even washed the disciples' feet. "The servant is not greater than his master;" surely you "should do as He has done." And sometimes He will call you to follow Him through pain and suffering. This is often specially hard to do rightly. You are unwell; you do not sleep at night, you feel nervous and irritable, and are inclined to give in and say, "I cannot go on following Him now that I am so poorly." But my friends it is then that you may, if you will, follow Him specially closely; for His life was a very suffering one, and you know how patient, and firm, and brave He was through all. His steps never faltered, let yours be like His.

And do not forget that His footsteps on that lonely hilly ground showed that He had waited, waited to pray, and gather strength for the journey. Think of Him kneeling there alone, finding refreshment and help after a hard day's work. Oh, follow Him in this too; pray much, pray often or you will never be able to follow Him in other ways.

All through your journey He feels for you, knowing its difficulties, because He has been it Himself; feels for you, yes, and makes excuses for you with that wonderful tender love of His. More than this, He has not only been before you. As we saw in Nettie's dream, He also goes with you, is with you now, will be with



you when you too reach the dark valley of the shadow of death.

You will *have* to follow Him through that valley, you will *have* to follow Him through the cold river of Death.

You can only do so with peace and gladness if you also have followed Him in your life.

May each one of us belong to those who "follow the Lamb, now, whithersoever He goeth!" (Rev. xiv. 4.)

## XX.

### THE DANGER OF FORGETTING.

How much forgetfulness there is in the world. Girls meet each other in service, or at their houses of business, and become very intimate. Then something happens to separate them; they part, promising to be friends all their lives long, and what then? very often, after all, they write but two or three letters, and in a few months have almost forgotten each other. Or a man has done some great kindness to a friend. "I shall never, never forget you, and your goodness to me," exclaims the friend warmly, and for a time he speaks and thinks often of the help which has been given him. But after a while the remembrance of it dies away, he sees his benefactor but seldom, too often he forgets him altogether.

This habit of forgetting the earthly friends whom we have loved is very sad, very ungrateful, but there is, alas, a still worse kind of forgetting, the forgetting of God, and what we have learned from Him.

To-day you have come here for the last Lesson which we shall have for some time. During many weeks we have been meeting together in Christ's name, and we have found His promise come true. He has been with us, and I think His blessing has rested on the class. I know some of you feel that you have learned from Him, and have received from Him here; you have learned to know in your own hearts the sinfulness of sin; you have learned about our Lord's forgiveness and love; you have learned to come to Him, and trust in Him; you have learned to

hunger and thirst after holiness ; you are learning to obey Christ, and to confess Him before men. Is it so?

Then, indeed, it is not I who have taught you. A greater teacher has been in our midst, the Lord Himself, oh thank Him for it.

And now I have a solemn last message for you from my Master. It is this :

“*Remember* how thou hast received and heard”  
(Rev. iii. 3).

The message is necessary. He who knows all hearts knew best how necessary it was. He spoke those words, He says them to you, “Remember how thou hast received and heard.” Many I fear do not remember ; many who have learned in some measure to love and serve God, grow careless, and go back, and forget Him.

I myself know at this present moment a girl who was confirmed a year ago. She was then very much in earnest, full of longing to lead a really Christian life, and for some time she struggled hard against sin, prayed regularly and often, read her Bible daily, and went every month to the Holy Communion. But now all this has changed ; so she tells me herself. She no longer fights the Christian’s battle, nor seeks the Christian’s strength in prayer and Holy Communion ; she is “giving it all up,” she is forgetting her Lord. How sad, how strange ! Must not the angels weep and wonder when they see her, and others who are behaving like her ?

Will it be so with any here before a twelvemonth has passed ?

God did much for the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness, but after all the mercy and goodness He had shown them there was still this great danger of their forgetting Him. And in solemn words, spoken by Moses, He warned them of it. Let

us read those words, for they too are spoken to us. Read Deut. viii. 11-19.

“*Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping His commandments . . . lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy flocks and herds multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied . . . then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage: who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents . . . and where there was no water; . . . who fed thee in the wilderness, with manna . . . But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God . . . and it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God . . . that ye shall surely perish.*”

Notice what it was that God had done for the Israelites: (1) (ver. 14,) “He had brought them out of the land of Egypt.” There they had been under the cruel bondage of king Pharaoh, ill-treated, oppressed, over-worked; they could not free themselves, but God freed them, He brought them out. (2) (ver. 15,) “He led them” through the wilderness. You remember how He was ever with them, how the pillar of cloud went before them by day, and the pillar of fire by night, to guide them safely through all dangers. (3) (vv. 16, 15), “He fed them” with the manna, the wondrous food from heaven, and with the pure clear water that flowed out of the rock. How much He had done for them! We might have thought it impossible they should ever forget Him who had brought them out of Egypt so lovingly, who had led them so faithfully, who had fed them with such a tender care for all their wants. But yet there was a great danger that they should forget their God, and so He warned them of it.

My friends, it seems to me that God has done for some of you just the very things He did for those Israelites.

Some time ago sin held you back, kept you in bondage to Satan. Then God "*brought you out*;" He drew you to Jesus who cleansed you from past sin, who helped to free you from Satan's power. Since then has He not also "*led you*," been with you day by day, showing you what to avoid and what to do, both by His voice, which you have heard in your hearts, and by His voice which has come to you through the Bible? And has He not also *fed you*?—I speak especially to those who have lately become communicants—has He not fed you with heavenly food, fed your souls with grace and strength as you knelt at your Lord's altar? Some here are not confirmed, and therefore are not communicants. But I ask you too whether He has not fed your hungering souls as you came to Him in prayer? And now perhaps you feel, "I can never forget Him who has been so good to me;" but take care, remember God's own warnings.

"Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God" (ver. 11); if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God and serve other gods . . . thou shalt surely perish (ver. 19). "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17).

The backward path of forgetting God, of "giving it all up," is so easy to follow. A girl joins a Bible Class or a Confirmation Class, and she becomes really in earnest, really anxious to be a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ's. After a time the confirmation day comes and goes, the class ceases, she has no longer its weekly reminder of the Master whom she promised to obey, and she becomes perhaps a little less careful in her daily life. As the weeks pass on

she grows less watchful over her tongue, less wishful to do each little thing for her Lord. She does not try so hard to remember that He sees her, and is with her all day long, she speaks to Him less often whilst at her work. Then her morning and evening prayers grow cold and hurried, she is forgetting how much she needs the strength which prayer will bring her. The Bible, which she used to read every evening, is now "a dull book," and the daily chapter is often forgotten. She began as a monthly communicant, but in time this appears to her "more often than she need go;" she forgets at what hour or on what Sunday it is given, "it never seems to be on her Sunday out;" at last she gives up going altogether, and little by little she quite forgets the loving Father in heaven. What a sad picture! but yet is it not a true one of only too many?

To see a member of any of my classes turn to Jesus, and give herself to Him and begin to lead an earnest Christian life is a great joy. It would be a perfect joy, were it not for this constant fear, which always haunts me, that after a time she may go back and "forget" the Master whom she is just learning to love.

Oh, let each one here "remember how she has received and heard." "Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God."

Turn to Deut. iv. 9, where this warning is again repeated: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen." Have you "seen" something of your Lord's wonderful love in dying for you; have you seen something of His tenderness in forgiving and accepting those who turn to Him? If so surely the sight was very beautiful. Then look and look again. "Take heed," "keep your soul diligently," for fear you should forget what your eyes have seen.

You know how carefully a garden must be "kept," it can't be put in order once for all and then left. Weeds must constantly be rooted up out of the gravel walks, the grass round the flower-beds must be clipped, the lawn mown, etc.; what time and trouble are needed even to "keep" a garden. Well, then, unless you keep your souls as diligently, weeds will come in them, faults, cares, and pleasures will so grow up as to choke the thought of Him whom you now long to serve.

"But how are we to "keep our soul," what shall we do, so as not to "forget" the Lord who loves us? I think we need to often go apart with our Lord and spend quiet moments very close to Him. This will help us to remember Him amidst the stir and bustle of our daily lives better than anything else.

You recollect how once when the disciples had been very busy, so busy that they had not even leisure to eat, then Jesus called them to come apart with Him into some quiet place where they could rest, and listen to His words, and tell Him all they had been doing (Mark vi. 31). Don't you think that afterwards, when they went back to their work, they must often have thought of those quiet moments and of the rest they got then?

And so our Lord calls us to come apart with Him in three different ways.

1. *In the Holy Communion.*

"Come ye and rest, the journey is too great,  
And ye will faint beside the way and sink;  
The Bread of Life is here for you to eat,  
And here for you the Wine of love to drink."

He knew how apt we are to forget One whom we don't see, so He appointed something to remind us of Him. "This do," he said; how? (Luke xxii. 19) "in remembrance of Me." And each time we do it, each time we

go to the Holy Communion, it does remind us of Jesus and His love. The broken bread reminds of His body broken and bruised for us on the cross of pain. The wine reminds us of the precious blood shed there to cleanse us from sin.

And far more than this. In the Holy Communion our Lord Himself comes to us and feeds and strengthens us. There we are joined very closely to Him, there He shows us more and more of His goodness and tenderness.

Oh, never neglect to go. Have you done so? Have you let little excuses keep you away, so that you have not been regularly? To act thus is most dangerous. Those who, when their Lord calls them to come apart and meet Him at His altar, do not go, are sadly apt to forget Him altogether. Make a rule then to communicate once a month at least.

But to remember our Saviour in every little action of your life you will need to come apart with Him far more often than this. And so I think He calls you to spend daily, quiet moments with Him, in the two other ways of which I want to speak to you.

2. *In Bible reading.* Supposing that a father is separated from his child, is in India perhaps, whilst his daughter is in England. Many hundreds of miles lie between them. The girl cannot see her father, and sometimes he fears that she may forget him, may forget his wishes. What does he do? He writes her letters telling her about himself, and telling her what he wishes her to do, and to be. She takes these letters upstairs to her own little room, and there she reads them alone. And as she does so it seems to her as if her father were speaking to her. How could she forget him?

Well, the Bible is God's letter to you; then say like David, "I will not forget Thy word" (Ps. cxix.



16). It will help you to remember God Himself, so read a little bit daily, and feel that your Heavenly Father is speaking to you through it.

Not long ago I sat next to a lady in church whom I knew to be a very holy woman. One who does try to remember Jesus in every action of her daily life, who does try to do each thing as He would have her do it. Well, she had her Bible with her, and that Bible seemed to explain to me why she was so good. It was marked and underlined in every page, showing how much and how carefully she read it. I felt that she spent many quiet hours every week alone with Jesus, listening to His words, and that it was coming apart with Him in that way which made her able to remember Him so constantly at other times—

“Come ye yourselves apart  
 And listen too,  
 For He has many things  
 To say to you.  
 He wants to let you know  
 What He has thought,  
 Of all this work for Him  
 That you have wrought.”

3. Our Lord calls you to spend daily quiet moments with Him *in prayer* (1 Chron. xvi. 11, 12). When you go apart with Him to read the Bible, He is speaking to you; when you go apart with Him to pray, you speak to Him; oh, tell Him of your faults, your temptations, your struggles, your falls. Ask Him to help you not to forget Him. Make real use of the time which you pass in prayer.

“Come ye yourselves apart,  
 And do not fear  
 To tell Him all your thoughts:  
 He loves to hear.  
 Begin where you left off;  
 Leave nothing out,  
 Tell Him each word and work,  
 Each hope and doubt.”

And be very sure that the quiet hours of your life which you take from business, and pleasure, and spend apart with your Lord at the Holy Communion, in Bible reading, and in prayer, will help you to keep from forgetting Him.

If you use them rightly as moments in which you can drink in strength, and grace, and refreshment from your Master, they will teach you indeed to remember Him.

“Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God.”

You may, if you will, not only keep from forgetting Him. You may, as you go apart with Jesus, learn far more than you at present know about Him, and His love, and goodness. He is ready and willing to go on teaching you in your hearts daily lessons about Himself if you will let Him.

“He who hath made thee whole  
Will heal thee day by day;  
He who hath spoken to thy soul  
Hath many things to say.  
He who hath gently taught,  
Yet more will make thee know;  
He who so wondrously hath wrought  
Yet greater things will show.  
He loveth always, faileth never,  
Remember Him to-day, for ever.”

And be very sure of one thing. However great your danger may be of forgetting God, there is no danger at all of His forgetting you. “Ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God” (Num. x. 9). In this great crowded city of London almost 4,000,000 of people are living, yet each one is remembered and watched over by God’s fatherly care. At certain times of the year a part of this great crowd, and several of you among it, flock out of London, some to Scotland, some to the sea-side, some abroad, some to country homes in England. And God will remember

each one just as much there as here. His own servants He will surely remember with a special tenderness. As day by day they spend quiet moments apart with Him, anxiously watching and praying not to forget Him, He will be remembering them with a love that passes all we understand, a love that makes kind allowance for their difficulties, and watches their struggles with the proud joy of a Father.

The Bible, says God, even keeps a book of remembrance, in which are written the names of all His servants (Mal. iii. 16, 17).

Oh, my friends, are your names written there now? Will you so remember God all your lives long, that they may still be written there when the judgment trumpet shall sound?

If so, God says, "You shall be Mine in that day."

"Thine for ever, God of love,  
Hear us from Thy throne above;  
Thine for ever may we be,  
Now, and in eternity."

HEADINGS OF THE LESSONS,  
WITH REFERENCE TEXTS, FOR DISTRIBUTION AMONGST  
THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS,  
WHEN THE MEETING IS OVER, AND FOR  
AIDING THE MEMORY OF THE TEACHER WHILST  
ADDRESSING THE GIRLS.

*(Copies may easily be multiplied by means of the Hectograph.)*



# APPENDIX.

## LESSON I.

### THE LORD JESUS IS ABLE TO SAVE US.

Notice three things Jesus "is able" to do:

- (1) He is able to save us. Heb. vii. 25.
- (2) He is able to keep us. Jude 24.
- (3) He is able to present us to God with exceeding joy. Jude 24.

(Story of the child and the fire.)

To-day we will talk about His being  
"Able to Save."

Some have remained ever since their  
Baptism in a "state of salvation."

Have you?

If not you are in danger of God's sentence of condemnation.

Matt. xxv. 41.

Those are in greatest danger who think  
not of it. (Travellers dying of cold.)

No unforgiven sinner can enter Heaven.

Rev. xxi. 27.

Read of one who "trembled" when  
he knew God was near.

Acts xvi. 19-31.

"What must I do to be saved?" he  
asked.

An answer.

God gave His Son to save us.

" " 31.

The Son gave Himself.

John iii. 16.

What good news!

1 Tim. i. 15.

He must be "able to save" you.

Luke ii. 10, 11.

Is it any use to be almost saved?

Acts xxvi. 28.

(Drowning man and rope.)

Have you been neglecting God?

Then turn from your sins to Jesus.

Trust His word—believe in Him—

"He is able to save you," and asks

"Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Matt. ix. 28.

## LESSON II.

## • HE IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU.

Story of the man who had learned to see only Christ's power to save.

He is also able to keep us.

Jude 24.

But how often we fall!

Because we do not let Him keep us.

A little child can walk, when its brother keeps hold of its hand.

Isa. xli. 13.

Jesus can only keep you, if you are really His. (Story of the man who put off till "too late.")

A question: 1 Chron. xxix. 5.

If you give yourself to Him you will find Him "able to keep you."

(1) *How will He keep you?*

Very tenderly—"as the apple of His eye." { Deut. xxxii. 9-12.  
John xvii. 12.

(2) *When will He keep you?*

Always; only "lift up your eyes" to Him.

Psalms cxxi. 5, 6, 1.

He will keep you when you go to, and come back from your work.

" " 8.

He will keep you in temptation.

" " 7.

He will keep you by day, by night.

" " 3, 4, 6.

(3) *Where will He keep you?*

Everywhere—at home—far away.

Gen. xxviii. 15.

With those that try you; "in all places."

How restless this should make us.

Isa. xxvi. 3.

(A little child cries when alone, but is quite happy in the keeping of an elder brother.)

**The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.**

Num. vi. 24.

Then you will find, at the last day, the *third promise* come true: "He will be able to present you" to God with exceeding joy.

Jude 24.

## LESSON III.

## PRAYER.

“Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.”

**How to pray :**

- (1)
- Expect an answer.*

St. Paul did.

Be like him, not like those who prayed for St. Peter.

- (2)
- Speak to God as to a friend.*

We don't have “wandering thoughts” in speaking to a friend.

We tell a friend everything.

So :

- (3)
- Be persevering in Prayer,*
- 
- like Jacob.

- (4)
- Pray often during the day.*

“I am so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand

One moment without Thee.

But oh ! the tenderness of Thine enfolding,

And oh ! the faithfulness of Thine upholding,

And oh ! the strength of Thy right hand,

That strength is enough for me.”

- (5)
- Strive after what you pray for.*

Have you prayed like this ?

**Will you ?**

Then you will soon be able to say :

“I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice, and my supplication . . . therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live.”

John xvi. 24.

Mark xi. 24.

Philemon 22.

Acts xii. 5, 7, 11-16.

Heb. iv. 16.

Phil. iv. 6.

Luke xviii. 1.

Gen. xxxii. 26-29.

{ 1 Tim. ii. 8.

{ Eph. vi. 18.

2 Chron. vii. 14.

Psalm cxvi. 1, 2.



## LESSON IV.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR US.

We like to remember the love of our earthly friends.

Let us study to-day the love Jesus has for us.

Eph. iii. 17-19.

Christ showed His love when on earth :

By suffering and dying for us.

John xv. 13.

(Story of the captain and the stow-away.)

By His sympathy.

John xi. 32-37.

(As for instance at Lazarus' grave.)

By His tender excuses for those who had sinned :

{ Matt. xxvi. 41.

{ Luke xxiii. 34.

Has He the same love for us that He had for Lazarus and His disciples? See :

Heb. xiii. 8.

Besides we know of four things He feels and does now, and all show His love :

(1) *He suffers when we sin.*

Heb. vi. 6.

(A mother sorrows over her son's sin. Why?)

(2) *He prays constantly for us.*

Heb. vii. 25.

(St. Augustine's mother and her prayers for him.)

(3) *He is very patient with us.*

2 Pet. iii. 9:

(Story of the woman's patience with her husband.)

(4) *He is preparing a place for us.*

John xiv. 2.

(The brother who prepared a home for his sister in Australia.)

Truly "the love of Christ passeth knowledge."

A question :

**What shall I render unto the Lord  
for all His benefits?**

Ps. cxvi. 12.

## LESSON V.

## WORDS.

What a number of words we all speak !  
 God does not think us "re-  
 ligious," unless we try to keep  
 from wrong words.

James i. 26.

Let us talk of two kinds of wrong  
 words :

(1) *Unkind words.*

How a spark of fire spreads in  
 the plains of America !

"The tongue is a fire" :

James iii. 5, 6.

How a story against some one  
 else spreads !

What harm it does, and how  
 changed it gets. (Russian  
 scandal.)

Do not tell others' sins to other sinners. { James iv. 11.  
 Tell Jesus only. { Lev. xix. 16.

(2) *Untrue words.*

What God thinks of liars :

{ 2 Kings v. 20-27.  
 { Prov. xii. 22.

(a) In this world no one trusts  
 a liar.

(The girls who lost the places  
 they applied for. The story  
 of wolf ! wolf !

(b) In the next world liars will  
 be shut out of Heaven.

Rev. xxii. 15.

To help you keep from wrong words  
 try and recollect that :

God hears and remembers all we say : { Ps. cxxxix. 4.  
 So pray often : { Matt. xii. 36, 37.

"Set a watch, oh, Lord, before my  
 mouth, and keep the door of  
 my lips."

Ps. cxli. 3.

## LESSON VI.

## THE HEAVENLY TEACHER.

The earthly teacher in a Bible Class can only teach you to know more with your heads.

(Story about the girl who thought the *clergyman* had changed her so much.)

The Heavenly Teacher, the Holy Spirit, can teach your hearts, and alter your lives.

We want Him to teach us :

(1) *About God the Father.*

John xvii. 3.

What mistakes people make about Him !

(The little child. The Scripture reader.)

1 John iv. 8.

Say to the Holy Spirit :

Job xxxiv. 32

Ask Him to make you realise that God is your Father.

Then see what will come true :

Rom. v. 5.

(2) *About God the Son*, our Lord Jesus Christ.

{ John xv. 26.

{ Job xxxvi. 22.

The Heavenly Teacher can show you His beauty.

(3) *About ourselves.*

{ Ps. xciv. 12.

{ John xvi. 8.

How self-satisfied some of us are !

We need the Holy Spirit to teach us about our sins.

Pure white snow makes us see how soiled other things are.

As the Holy Spirit shows us the purity of God, we shall see more of our own sinfulness.

Job xlii. 5, 6.

**Why** is the Holy Spirit such a wonderful Teacher?

Because He is God, and has been from the beginning with the Father and the Son. 1 Cor. ii. 11, 13.

Because He is always with us, and knows us. { 1 Cor. iii. 16.  
John xiv. 26.

**Pray for His teaching** in your Bible reading and in this Class, for me, for yourself.

## LESSON VII.

### DEATH.

When, or how we shall die we know not. But we must die.

Heb. ix. 27.

The "last time" of doing our every-day actions will come.

Never put off the thought of death!  
(Child and graves.)

Try and fancy how death might come to you:

Suddenly, or by an illness—doctor's visits—grave faces—"no hope of recovery."

**Should you be ready?** or would these words express your feelings?

Ps. lv. 4, 5.

Remember death will make no sudden change in you.

Unless you have begun here to lead the life of God's servants there, you would not be ready. What kind of life is that?

(1) *God's servants in Heaven will love to worship Him.*

Rev. vii. 9-13.

Are you learning to worship Him gladly here?

- (2) *God's servants in Heaven will rejoice in His presence.* { Rev. vii. 15.  
Ps. xvi. 11.

Does the thought of God being near you here cause you joy?

- (3) *God's servants in Heaven will serve Him.*

Rev. vii. 15.

Are you serving Him here?

In short, **Are you ready to die?**

Some meet death indifferently, with sleeping consciences.

Some meet it in fear. (Dying man and prince.)

Some meet it with peace. (Dying woman.) { Phil. i. 21.  
Ps. cxvi. 15.

**Prepare** for the journey into the Heavenly land. (Rich man and servant.)

Christ can take away your fear of death; by taking away your sin. **"The sting of death is sin."**

Heb. ii. 15.

1 Cor. xv. 56.

And **"Now** is the appointed time, **now** is the day of salvation."

## LESSON VIII.

### SIN.

What makes many unprepared to meet God?

What keeps many back in serving God?

The burden of *unforgiven sin*.

(Christian in Pilgrim's Progress started for the Heavenly City with his burden of past sins still on him.)

Many do this now, and so are kept back.

*Are your sins* still on you? still *unforgiven*?

Some feel : "I am very bad." They  
know their burden of sin is heavy.  
The Holy Spirit has been teaching  
them.

John xvi. 8.

Do you feel this ?

If not, see what Christ says to you :

Rev. iii. 17, 18.

Pray to feel it :

Job xiii. 23.

God is very holy. In His sight, even  
the Heavens are not clean.

Job xv. 15, 16.

What must He think of us !

People sometimes do wrong things,  
and then excuse themselves. "One  
can't be so particular," they say.

God calls those things "**Sin.**"

SEE : Prov. x. 19, xxi. 4, xxiv. 9 ; James  
iv. 17 ; 1 John iii. 4, v. 17.

God's sentence is :

**The wages of sin is death.**

Rom. vi. 23.

**The soul that sinneth it shall die.**

Ezek. xviii. 4.

Who only make light of sin ?

Prov. xiv. 9.

Try, by self-examination, to find out your  
sins, that you may repent of them.

For unforgiven sin must shut you  
out of Heaven, must make you  
unfit to meet God.

{ Jer. x. 10.  
{ Isa. lix. 2.  
{ Job xxiii. 5.

Say as you examine yourself :

"Lord, how many are my sins ?"

"Lord, make me to know my sin."

**Then :**

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh  
away the sins of the world."

## LESSON IX.

## PARDON.

How can we dare live with unforgiven sin upon us ?

Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

God wants to pardon, not to condemn.

„ „ 11.

He says :—

“Turn ye from evil.”

Are you ready to turn from all that is evil ?

(Story of the woman who could not find pardon till she was ready to do so.)

If *you* honestly wish to give up all sin, God is willing to forgive *you*.

Do you reply : “I’m too bad, He will never receive me.”

Then see :

Isa. lv. 6–9, 12.

*But how are you to get this forgiveness ?*

What did John the Baptist say to those who repented of sin, and wished to turn from it ?

John i. 29.

See also :

Isa. liii. 5, 6.

Christ then can give you pardon.

Acts xiii. 38.

He calls you to **come to Him** for it.

Matt. xi. 28.

(The pardon, and rest, and peace He gives, do not fail people in the hour of death. Two Stories.)

How others came to Him :

{ Matt. viii. 2, 3,  
5–8, 13, 23–26.

**You** can come like that. It is :

“Only a step to Jesus :

Then why not take it now ?

Come, and your sins confessing,

You shall receive a blessing ;

Do not reject His mercy :

Oh, why not take it now ?”

How you can feel sure that Christ will receive you.

John vi. 37.

You will need to come, not once only, but daily.

{ John xiii. 8  
(last part).  
I John i. 7.

Those who *have* come, and *have* received His pardon can say :

{ Rom. v. 1.  
,, xiv. 8.

### LESSON X.

THOU HAST DONE ALL FOR ME. WHAT SHALL I DO FOR THEE ?

We have been speaking of Christ's sufferings for us.

Of the pardon He offers to all penitent sinners.

Has He given you that pardon ?

Then let us ask to-day :

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits ?

Ps. cxvi. 12.

What can I do for Him

Who has done so much for me ?

This is always our first thought with earthly friends (ivy cross).

What was St. Paul ready to do and bear for his Lord ?

Acts xxi. 8-15.

*Question :* What can you do for Him ?

*Answer :* "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Col. iii. 17.

"Even little common things!"

Yes. "Whatever." "All."

Little things become great and grand when done for Him.

(The dream about the Daisy, which became a crown.)



*Description of a day, and how to do all for Christ.*

Getting up. Prayers. Breakfast.	
Work (not done for earthly overseer),	Col. iii. 22.
but for heavenly overseer.	"    " 23.
Words.	"    " 17.
Dinner-time, etc.	"    " 24.
It is not asking too much of you to say,	} Luke xvi. 5. } Philem. 19.
"Do all for Jesus."	
(The verses in the Mission Hall.)	
You owe Him yourself.	
Body and spirit belong to Him.	1 Cor. vi. 20.
Then all that the hands do, and the lips say, should be in His Name.	2 Cor. v. 15.
<b>Whatever ye do . . . do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.</b>	

## LESSON XI.

### HOLY COMMUNION (1).

How much we think of the last dying words and wishes of our friends! Read: Matt. xxvi. 26-29.

Three reasons why the Holy Communion is very important:

(1) *Because it is our Lord's dying wish.*

The unconfirmed should not say "it has nothing to do with me." Look forward to it, as you would to a great gift.

(2) *Because it is His plain command.* Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.

Can we serve Him, and yet disobey Him in this?

(The risks Christians ran in old days to obey this command.)

But say: "May I go?" not "Must I go?"

(3) *Because it is the greatest help we have.*

In the Holy Communion our Lord comes to us:  
and feeds and strengthens our souls:

John vi. 48, 56.

(Story of the Cripple.)

" " 55, 57.

You need this strength.

" " 53.

Then go regularly.

Some of you must first be confirmed.

**Confirmation** is, amongst other things, a solemn public coming forward, to acknowledge Christ as our Master.

God has always demanded from His servants a public acknowledgment that they serve Him.

Exod. xxxii. 26.

Coming to be confirmed is an answer to the question:

"Who is on the Lord's side?"

Begin now to prepare for it. After it you too will be able to receive the Holy Communion.

## LESSON XII.

### HOLY COMMUNION (2).

Is it not very cold-hearted and very ungrateful, to neglect a friend's dying wish?

Dare a servant decline to obey one of his master's commands?

Is it not madness to refuse a blessing offered to us?

Then come to the Holy Communion.

Come earnestly, looking for Christ's blessing. He will receive you.

It is not "dangerous" for those to come who honestly wish to serve Him.

If you are not "fit" to come, you are not "fit" to die.

We should prepare for Holy Communion.

(The girl who was preparing to go to the Queen's palace.)

1 John iii. 3.

1 Sam. vii. 3.

### How to prepare for the Holy Communion.

(a) By self-examination.

1 Cor. xi. 28.

(Scouts examine a country in times of war) how? why?

(b) By prayer.

Jer. xxix. 12.

(c) By trying hard to keep from every stain of sin.

Job xi. 13-15.

### How to receive the Holy Communion.

(1) Remember Jesus and all He has done for you.

Luke xxii. 19.

(2) Plead with God to accept you because of His death.

1 Cor. xi. 26.

(3) Speak to Jesus about your sins and difficulties, asking Him to give you much of His strength and help (Hymn 255).

(4) After you have communicated thank Him for His great gift to you.

(5) Pray for the other Communicants.

## LESSON XIII.

### WORK FOR JESUS.

Hundreds all round are living as if there were no God.

Hundreds more who have turned to *Him are slipping back into sin for want of a friend to help them.*

**Who can help?**

A question and an answer: Isa. vi. 8.  
 What will He send you to do? Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

Three ways in which you can thus  
 work for Christ—

- (1) *By speaking for Him*:  
 “too shy,” “too young.” See Jer. i. 6-10.
- (2) *By your money*:  
 (sales of work for sending out }  
 extra clergy). } 2 Cor. ix. 7.  
 2 Cor. viii. 12.
- (3) *By your prayers*:  
 (instances of people who prayed }  
 for others). } James v. 16.

Some work for the Devil instead of  
 Christ, and will get the Devil's wages. Rom. vi. 23.

We can only work for Christ if  
 He is our Master.

His command to His servants: { Matt. xxi. 28,  
 last part.

Each day's work is marked out for you.  
 Don't leave it undone, for

**The night cometh when no man  
 can work.** John ix. 4.

## LESSON XIV.

## SHINING FOR JESUS.

Christ when on earth said:  
 “I am the Light of the world.” John viii. 12.  
 He has gone back to Heaven.

*Who shine for him now?* See { Phil. ii. 15;  
 last part.  
 (Kings often send some one to repre-  
 sent them.)

*Christ's commands to His servants*: { Matt. v. 16.  
 Isa. lx. 1, 2.

(The girl who left the worldly dress-making establishment).

Had she stayed. See: Isa. ix. 2.

*Christ's servants must shine always.* Eph. v. 8.

At work, in spare time, with girl friends, with men friends, etc.

(The light burned *always* in the heathen temple.)

*They get their light from Him, "the Sun of righteousness."* Eph. v. 14.

(The moon shines with a light borrowed from the sun.) So see: } Isa. lx. 20.  
 } . , ii. 5.

Be much with Jesus in **prayer**, that you may borrow light from Him.

Like St. Peter and St. John. See Acts iv. 13.

One wilful sin will prevent His light from shining on us. (A shutter fastened by one nail keeps out the sun-light.)

*A bright light draws others to it.* Matt. v. 16.

(Flowers turn towards the sun.)

Your light should draw souls to Jesus.

(Story of two young ladies in the country house.)

Is your light bright? Is it shining daily more?

Prov. iv. 18.

In Heaven there will be no sin to dim it.

**"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."**

Matt. xiii. 43.

## LESSON XV.

## COURAGE IN THE FIGHT.

The 600,000 Israelites who left Egypt, had many enemies to conquer, before they could enjoy the Promised Land.

But they were to fight with courage :

We have a Promised Land and many enemies to conquer (our sins and faults).

And we should have courage, for

*We too belong to an "exceeding great army."*

(The thought of great numbers is always stirring.)

*We too have the same Captain.*

"Cleave unto Him" and take courage. (Story of Euplius, and how he won his battle.)

Those only need fear, who fight without the Captain.

"Distrust thyself, but trust His strength.

In Him thou shalt be strong ;

His weakest ones may learn at length

A daily triumph song."

Many fail because they fight without looking to Jesus.

(Story of one who had to stand against ridicule, and how she did it.)

"Cleave unto the Lord," when tried like this, and remember :

In every battle: "Fear not."

**Be strong and of a good courage** . . . for the Lord . . . it is that doth go with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Exod. xii. 37.

Deut. xx. 1-5, 8.

" " "

Isa. xli. 6.

Josh. v. 13-15.

,, xxiii. 8-11.

Deut. i. 42-45.

Heb. xi. 36.

Deut. xxxi. 6.

## LESSON XVI.

## THE HEAVENLY FRIEND.

At this time we should  
 look back (how have you spent  
 188-?),  
 and look forward (we know nothing  
 about the future, its joys and  
 pleasures, its sorrows and  
 anxieties).

We need a **Friend** to be with us, and  
 help us face this unknown future.  
 (Little child and school; girl's first  
 place.)

A real friend must—

Love us, understand us, be near us,  
 and be able to help us.

Jesus offers to be the Friend of each  
 one all through this coming year.

Is He the kind of friend you want?

**He loves you.**

John xv. 15.

Jer. xxxi. 3.

**He understands you, and feels for  
 you.**

Exod. iii. 7.

**He is always near you.**

Exod. iii. 12.

**He can help you.**

2 Chron. xx. 9.

How have you treated this Friend  
 during 188-?

How will you treat Him during 188-?

(1) Bring all your joys, and troubles,  
 and temptations to Him. (We  
 tell a friend everything.)

“They told Him all things.”

Mark vi. 30.

(2) Try harder than ever not to grieve  
 Him and cause a look of pain  
 to pass over His face.

Luke xxii. 54-63.

*This is a season of good wishes.*

Christ's New Year wish to you :  
 "That you should be always ready." Matt. xxiv. 44.  
 "Ready" during each day and  
 week of 188-.  
 Ready at its close, if you live till  
 then.

## LESSON XVII.

## THE REFINER'S FIRE.

The dirt and dross round the gold is burned away in the furnace. The Refiner watches the fire and heats the furnace just enough. The gold stays in the furnace till it is so bright that he can see his face in it.

The dirt and dross in us (our faults) are burned away by the Heavenly Refiner. { Mal. iii. 3.  
 { Zech. xiii. 9.

He uses two furnaces :

(1) *The furnace of trouble and suffering.* Isa. xlvi. 10.

(Three stories of people purified by suffering.)

Isa. i. 25.

Little troubles as well as great are part of the Refiner's fire.

(2) *The furnace of temptation.* James i. 2, 12.

temptation is a "blessing" because it purifies.

(The man who escaped from temptation and whose temper was not cured.)

Some say they have been in both furnaces and are none the better. In this we are different from the gold.

Let the Refiner's furnaces burn away your faults. { Job xxiii. 10.  
 { 1 Pet. i. 7.

Christ would see His likeness in you.  
 Does He ?



If so, you can say :	{ Ps. cxix. 71. James i. 2.
Those who stand before God's throne have been in the Refiner's fire.	Rev. vii. 13.
They too would tell us	
“Glory in troubles”	{ Rom. v. 3. John xvi. 20.
“Count temptation a joy.”	James i. 2, 12.
Why ?	
Because “When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.”	Job xxiii. 10.

## LESSON XVIII.

## LOVING OUR LORD MORE AND MORE.

What should make us willing to do disagreeable things when they are right ?

All Christ's saints have obeyed

Him out of love. (Instances :)

St. Paul's wish for the Christians at Philippi.

Phil. i. 9.

**How shall we learn to love Him more ?**

(Not by always examining our love. That is like a child pulling up a plant, to examine its root.)

We shall increase our love by getting to know Jesus better.

Get to know Him better,

(1) *Through the Bible — especially the Gospels.*

John v. 39.

(We may learn to know a person through letters telling about them.)

(We may learn to know a picture by gazing at it.)

The Gospels are like four letters

about Jesus, or four pictures  
of Him.

Learn about Him. Gaze at Him  
as you read them.

See for instance : Luke vii. 36-50 ; xi.  
37-45 ; xix. 41, 42.

A promise to those who try this : Hos. vi. 3.  
Get to know Him better,

(2) *Through being more with Him in  
your daily life.*

(Scotch woman and Queen.)

There is One who has known Jesus through all ages, and can help you to know, and so to love Him.	} John xv. 26. John xvi. 14.
---	---------------------------------

More love for Christ will  
bring with it :

- (a) An earnest, glad obedience.
- (b) A deeper sorrow for sin.
- (c) A heart full of praise and thanks-  
giving.

I will love Thee, oh, Lord, my Strength. Ps. xviii. 1.

## LESSON XIX.

### FOLLOWING OUR LORD.

Nettie's Dream :

The bright City : Rev. xxi. 10, 11.  
How to get there.

The King of the City has gone the  
journey beforehand. He says : 1 Pet. ii. 21.  
"Follow thou Me."

An answer : Matt. viii. 19.

Nettie started on the journey.

The footsteps led away from the wood-  
cutters and the bright pebbles [harmless  
things are wrong, at wrong moments]. Rom. xv. 3.

- Is it hard to give them up?  
*"What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."*  
 John xxi. 22.
- "Oh let me see Thy footmarks  
 And in them plant my own;  
 My hope to follow duly  
 Is in Thy strength alone."  
 The footsteps showed the King had  
 lingered in some places; why?  
 Matt. xiv. 23.
- The footsteps led to the sick girl's  
 cottage and the old man's home.  
 Acts x. 38.
- We "do not want to go there."  
*"What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."*
- He who had gone the journey before  
 them was going it again with  
 them.  
 Gen. xxviii. 15.
- The footsteps led to the ragged child  
 who wanted help. "Not my place." See  
 The footsteps led through pain and  
 suffering.  
 John xiii. 5, 16,  
 15.
- "Follow! follow! I would follow  
 Jesus.  
 Anywhere, everywhere, I would  
 follow on."  
 The footsteps led to the dark valley.  
 Ps. xxiii. 4.
- And across the cold river.  
 Isa. xliii. 1, 2.
- Then to the bright City.  
 The Angel's greeting:  
 "These are they which follow the  
 Lamb, whithersoever He goeth."  
 Rev. xiv. 4.
- "Finding, following, keeping,  
 struggling,  
 Is He sure to bless?  
 Angels, Martyrs, Prophets,  
 Virgins,  
 Answer, Yes."

## LESSON XX.

## THE DANGER OF FORGETTING.

How easily people forget each other !

How easily people forget God !

Have you learned something of the badness of sin, of God's love, of coming to Christ, and trusting Him ?

Then His message to you is :

“Remember how thou hast received and heard.”

Rev. iii. 3.

“Beware lest thou forget the Lord who brought thee out, and led thee, and fed thee.”

Deut. viii. 11-20.

A warning about forgetting :

Ps. ix. 17.

Keep thy soul lest thou forget.

Deut. iv. 9.

Christ to help you remember calls you “apart” with Him.

Mark vi. 31.

(1) *In the Holy Communion.*

Luke xxii. 19.

(Never neglect to go each month.)

(2) *In your Bible reading.*

Ps. cxix. 16.

(The lady and the marked Bible.)

(3) *In Prayer.*

1 Chron. xvi. 11, 12.

(As you go apart with Jesus you may, if you will, not only keep from forgetting, but also learn far more.)

“He who hath made thee whole  
Will heal thee day by day ;  
He who hath spoken to thy soul  
Hath many things to say.  
He loveth always, faileth never,  
*Remember Him to-day, for ever.*”

God will never forget you.

Num. x. 9.

His book of remembrance.

Mal. iii. 16, 17.

“Thine for ever, God of love,  
Hear us from Thy Throne above ;  
Thine for ever may we be  
Here and in Eternity.”

THE END.

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